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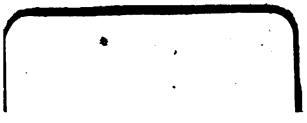

MYSTERIES

ELUCIDATED,

A NOVEL.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

DANISH MASSACRE, MONMOUTH

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MYSTERIES ELUCIDATED.

Fen-vaipoures blaſte thie everiche manlie powere,
Bee youre names blaſted from the rolle of dome.

ROWLEY'S ÆLLA—Pages 113, 114.

CHAP. I.

WE left the unhappy Raymond proſecuting a journey, tedious in the performance, and promiſing a melancholy termination. The poliſte and friendly attention he received from his principal guard, revived, in all the bitterneſs of recollection, a keen

ſenſe of his former ſituation, when fortune diſtinguiſhed him as her greateſt favourite; but the terrible ruin which had enveloped his beloved protector, was now in the very act of cruſhing all his bright expectations, and levelling him with the loweſt of England's enemies. He had now ſufficient leiſure to examine the ſituation of his heart, and there diſcovered, notwithſtanding the dangerous circumſtances every day ſeemed to increaſe, that the image of innocent Ella brightened every tint a youthful hope could ſhed upon his gloomy proſpect, or ſhew the ſhadow of deſpair upon ſaddened retroſpection. He knew not her connexions; he only knew that ſhe was intereſting to his peace; that ſhe was not Lambert's daughter, and that the expreſſive ſweetneſs (combined with dignity) of her countenance, had indelibly impreſſed the character of love upon the ſoul, and amidſt the darkeſt idea of expected evil, a preſentiment would ſometimes ariſe, that he ſhould yet render her ſome eſſential ſervice, for he remembered the parting words of

Deſpencer,

Deſpencer, the cloſet, with its contents, the letters he had ſeen, as well as the ring, which he had happily perceived, and which was engraved with the letters E. and M. and entertained no doubt but they referred to the myſtery of Ella's fate, and the more as he reflected upon the extraordinary agitation ſhe evinced while he was telling his affecting tale.

Two days had now nearly elapſed, when Sir Jocelin, Raymond's conductor, pointed to the towers of a caſtle, which overlooked the lofty wood to the right of the road they were in, informing him that was the termination of their travels.

"Are we not in Glouceſterſhire?" aſked De Vallenciennes.

"We are, my Lord, and that is Berkley-Caſtle."

"And *that* is to be my priſon."

" I believe your Lordſhip is expected to ——."

" Enough, enough, Sir Jocelin, you are not to blame; Mortimer has not yet reached the climax of his vices, but his career cannot hold long."

While they were converſing they entered upon a private road, which wound among the trees, aſcending gradually, till the wood opening at once diſcovered the venerable fabric, the whole front of which was in decent repair, and defended by a parapet wall, broad enough to admit ſeveral people to walk abreaſt. It had no foſſe on the outſide, the precipice upon which it was built, though not very high, riſing to the foot of the wall ſo abruptly, as to render any other mode of defence needleſs. Each end was flanked with a baſtion, and a bank of earth, which had been formerly thrown up, ſurrounded the back and ſides of this noble edifice; the towers of which there were four, commanded

an

an almoſt boundleſs proſpect of South Wales; but they were not in the moſt perfect ſtate; two of them in particular were much decayed, ſeveral large ſtones had fallen from the battlements, and they exhibited a ſcene of deſolation not in union with the reſt of the building: However, Raymond was extremely well lodged and treated by Lord Berkley, who waited in the porch of the great entrance to receive him with a reſpectful affability; but when they entered upon the ſubject of his confinement, De Vallenciennes began to think his cauſe in a hopeleſs ſtate, and was confounded at the rancour of Deſpencer's enemies, which ſpared none who were ſuſpected of any attachment to him, or his helpleſs ſovereign.

"I was extremely ſorry (ſaid the Earl, as they ſat at ſupper) to hear of Lord Deſpencer's ſhocking fate. Had I been at Briſtol when he ſuffered ——."

"At Briſtol! (interrupted Raymond;) your Lordſhip is miſtaken. Mortimer effected his infernal purpoſe in the North."—Berkley ſhook his head, and would have changed the ſubject; but his gueſt trembling with impetuous apprehenſion, entreated an explanation of his meaning. It *was* explained with much delicacy, and an evident reluctance; but what was Raymond's horror to be told, "that his wretched friend lived long enough to be conveyed to Briſtol, where he had commanded the garriſon, and in defiance of the Chief, who would have ſaved him from Mortimer's cruelty while in the North. The ſoldiers had taken him out of the General's hands, and hung him upon the town gibbet, in a ſituation that made his death a welcome relief.—Burning with indignation, that could have vented itſelf even upon the guiltleſs narrator, De Vallenciennes preſerved a dreadful ſilence—the cauſe of which Lord Berkley readily accounted for, and as readily excuſed his ſudden departure, and ordered a ſervant to lead him to his chamber,

chamber, where he indulged a burſt of grief the more freely as it was not witneſſed. — For ſeveral days, by his own requeſt, Raymond took his proviſions alone; but in the courſe of that period reflection taxed him with want of politeneſs, and he no longer refuſed that ſociety, which his Lordſhip's gentleneſs made really deſirable. This, however, was a felicity too valuable for his poſſeſſion. He had one evening retired earlier than uſual to his apartment, when a buſtle in the hall alarmed him, which was preceded by the ſounding of the horn with unuſual violence. The myſtery was ſoon partly elucidated, Raymond opening a window, which looked upon the front court, beheld Lord Berkley converſing with ſeveral men, who, diſmounting from their horſes, accompanied him into the caſtle; their figures were by no means prepoſſeſſing. The ſteeds, jaded and ſplaſhed, followed the grooms with a feeble pace to the ſtables, while the riders, equally dirty and weary, appeared to no better advantage. As Raymond ſtood ruminating

upon the cauſe of ſuch a late viſit, a ſecond party arrived at the gates more numerous than the firſt, and, by the light of a ſolitary torch, he faintly diſcovered a kind of litter, which could not be drawn within the gates, as there was a rough ſtep juſt before them. The men who came firſt now haſtened to the litter, extinguiſhing, with ſeveral execrations, the only light there was, and De Valenciennes could barely diſcover a whitiſh figure deſcend from the carriage, with ſeeming difficulty walk, attended by the men, towards the left baſtion, where he ſtopped, and in a broken voice exclaimed, "When, when, will my mournful pilgrimage have an end? O barbarous and moſt villainous of the human ſpecies!"—A low and haſty curſe from one of the people prevented a farther explanation, and the poor creature was heard no more. A ſudden noiſe in the gallery arouſing the aſtoniſhed priſoner from his reverie, he haſtily cloſed the window, and in the ſame moment heard his noble friend aſk admittance, and as ſoon as he entered, after apologizing for the unuſual diſturbance, informed Raymond that

that he ſhould leave the caſtle at early dawn, as the Queen commanded his immediate preſence at Mortimer Houſe, where ſhe then reſided, and that Gourney and Maltravers, two obſcure people, were deputed by Parliament to govern the caſtle during his abſence.

Lord Berkley ſhuddered as he ſpoke, and departed with theſe myſterious words:—"I leave *you*, my friend, with reluctance; but this place is now become a ſcene of horror, and my paternal ſeat will in future be hateful to me.—Adieu—be patient—be reſigned—you have no other chance for liberation."—

He then embraced the aſtoniſhed youth, and left him encouraging a preſentiment of future calamity. The appearance of the new Governors did not controvert the idea he had formed, for to their characters he was no ſtranger. Dark cloudy brows, hovering over two down-looking ſquinting eyes, added to Gourney's ſavage ferocity of aſpect; nor did the yellow viſage, and ſhy averted

looks, of the deep Maltravers give a more liberal indication of his principles. The firſt inſtance they gave of arbitrary power was, in poſitively interdicting Raymond's walks beyond the baſtions on either ſide, and on a ſpirited remonſtrance on the ſubject, for he adverted not juſt then to Berkley's caution. Maltravers haughtily threatened not only to confine him to his chamber, but, if oppoſed, would curtail his liberty in a manner yet more formidable. Unable to cope with wretches, who, in that domain, were in the practice of plenary power, the noble captive ſtruggled with his boiling rage, and condeſcended to plead for the freedom of the environs as before; but Gourney's flaming aſpect convinced him he aſked too much, and the limitation was again enforced.

With this Raymond was obliged to be ſatisfied, and ſometimes, when the weather would permit, continued his excurſions till midnight, often converſing with the lately arrived

arrived centinels, who mounted guard upon the flat baſtions; but to every queſtion relative to the unhappy ſufferer they had attended to the caſtle, they oppoſed a rude and ſullen ſilence, and more than once preſented their ſpears to his boſom as he endeavoured to paſs them, which proved a ſufficient check to the compaſſionate curioſity he had no chance to gratify, and the winter ſetting in extremely wet, he ſeldom availed himſelf of the permiſſion he had received to walk at night: But now the interior part of the building became the favourite object of his contemplation. Long after he had retired to repoſe, he had often heard a foot-ſtep in the gallery, into which his chamber opened. It ſeemed to paſs to the left of his door, and in ſomewhat more than a quarter of an hour he could hear it return, and once he heard Gourney, in ſtuttering accents, reproach his companions with cowardice, which convinced Raymond that they were in purſuit of ſome black deſign, ſo that he was determined to watch them.

The following night was cold and ſtormy. The Governors relaxing their uſual ſtrictneſs, invited their priſoner to partake the renovating comforts of a cheerful fire, generous wines, and choice viands, and the heavy bell tolled the hour of twelve before they roſe from table, when Gourney, who had drank to a degree of inebriation, ſtammered out his orders to Raymond to retire, taking a lamp at the ſame time to accompany him. Raymond was not in a ſituation to refuſe, and followed by Maltravers, ſoon reached the door of his apartment; here they left him, and he heard them as uſual ſtagger to the end of the gallery, where was a ſmall door ſecurely faſtened, which led to the Weſt Tower.—This was the moment which promiſed an elucidation of their midnight viſits: Waiting then till they uncloſed the iron door, he found they met with conſiderable difficulty, and Gourney ſetting down the lamp was obliged to uſe all the ſtrength the potent libations had left him; but in a ſecond attempt he overturned the light, Maltravers curſing

ſurſing his awkwardneſs, ſwore he would neither go back for another, nor yet ſtay in the dark.

" What (replied Gourney, ſneeringly) are you afraid of a ghoſt?"

" As to a ghoſt, time enough for that; yet, I think, the ſooner the better, if we mean to obey orders. True, what was the milkſop Berkley called away for, but want of courage? It is a noble deed, my boy; ſhall we do it to night?"

" What, in the dark?"

" And why not—you have a dagger?"

" A dagger won't do: Blood tell tales; there are ſafer methods."

" But come, fetch a light; there is one in that gay ſpark's room,—Perhaps his turn comes next."

" He

"He is a noble fellow (anſwered Gourney:) I like his ſpirit, but I fancy his fate's decreed."

He then entered Raymond's chamber, who had thrown himſelf beneath the bed clothes, and Gourney returning, told his companion their priſoner was aſleep. As he had luckily left the door unfaſtened De Vallenciennes eaſily purſued them unheard, time enough to follow at a diſtance, as the light they held directed him.—The lock and bars now gave way to their renewed efforts, and they paſſed up ſome ſtone ſteps winding along the broken wall,—Raymond alſo advanced juſt cloſe enough to catch the faint gleam which ſlowly retired as they aſcended. They had now reached the top, and were picking their ſteps along a ſhort paſſage, the old oak boards of which rendered dangerous by the innovations time had made on them, ſhook as they paſſed, and throwing open a door at the ſide, diſcovered a ſmall room in a ſtate ſimilar to the paſſage.

Raymond

Raymond came gently forwards, but overcome by the feelings of a generous and compaſſionate heart he could ſcarcely ſupport himſelf in ſilence.

In a corner of the room, the fartheſt from the entrance, reclined a figure, to which no deſcription could do juſtice,—Raymond viewed it with horror, and remembered the viſion he had ſeen on the platform of the caſtle, not very far from Lambert's Cottage. The pallid face, half covered by a long-neglected beard (and which, though ſeen only by moon-light) he could not forget, and when the hollow *voice* ſtruck upon his heart, it was convicted with ideas of fearful import.

" Surely (thought Raymond) if this be a real living object, I have ſeen one ſupernatural; ſtill he gazed, and was ready to ſpring to the poor creature's aſſiſtance, as he painfully and ſlowly aroſe from the wretched pallet to meet his gaolers, who rudely demanded

manded why he had moved his bed from the window?"

Liſting up an eye melting with ſilent anguiſh, and waving his hand, he pointed to the chaſms in the roof, through which the rain ſtreamed in torrents; nor was this all, the battlements choaked with dirt and various filth, turned the courſe of the water, which ſhould have flowed through the holes where ſpouts had formerly been placed, and they made their way through the broken caſement, rendering the place cold and damp to the extremeſt degree.

"You might, at leaſt," he cried, in a low broken tone, "at leaſt you might have afforded me a *dry* habitation till the pleaſure of my perſecutors be known. Your inſults too of laſt night I have not forgotten. It was not the putrid water you in ridicule preſented me with, to cleanſe theſe waſted cheeks, that I would uſe. No—No—the clear and warm effuſions of a diſtracted brain, produced

produced too from a broken heart, ſuits them beſt;—then lifting up his hands, while the tears poured over his emaciated countenance, he cried:

"O God of mercies! wilt thou not pity and relieve thy diſtreſſed ſervant? Wilt thou not avenge me of mine enemies?"—He was interrupted by Gourney, who barbarouſly ſtruck him on the mouth.

Raymond ſtepped forwards,—He had no weapon, but the horrid action blinded him to every prudential conſideration. His arm was uplifted, and he was in the attitude of ſtriking: but the words of the abuſed priſoner averted the intended blow, who looking at the inhuman aſſailant with a majeſtic aſpect, and waving his hand, bid him "Be gone, nor dare to enter the dwelling of miſery, till he had better underſtood how to treat oppreſſed royalty."

"*Royalty*—

" *Royalty*—O what a ſuſpicion darted into Raymond's boſom! — *Royalty* — He drew nearer—He forgot Gourney—He forgot the provocation—He forgot the world—It was *Edward*—It was his dear impriſoned maſter. —The inſulted—abuſed victim of illicit attachment—The depoſed monarch of an ungrateful people, and the friend of his late beloved protector—Not the preſence of the tyrants—not the fear of death, could prevent him from flying to his worſhipped king. — He would have caught him to his heart — He would have chafed the cold chilled limbs that had almoſt loſt their power of action; but the monſters partly recovering from their momentary ſurpriſe, attempted to force him from the poor aſtoniſhed, almoſt fainting, Edward! who feebly ſtruggling to detain him, exclaimed:

" One friend—one friend, my rigorous deſtiny allows.—Tear him not from his deſolate Lord.—*You* know not the bleſſing of a friend.

—Confined

—Confined within theſe damp and dreary walls, how have I wiſhed for the gentle ſolace of friendſhip.—This night—only this night—*Two* hours—even *one*—let me but embrace, a youth I always loved.—With the ſtrength of a maniac Raymond once more freed himſelf, and, though armed, they dreaded to encounter the rage which ſupplied him with ten-fold vigour, but retired, muttering denunciation of the moſt furious vengeance."

CHAP.

CHAP. II.

All pale—neglected—unreveng'd—he lies—
Aſk ye, whoſe barbarous hand the deed has wrought,
The deed muſt open lie—to every thought.

TASSO.

THOUGHTLESS of future puniſhment this faithful, generous ſubject employed the few minutes he commanded in ſoothing and conſoling the Royal Sufferer, who informed Raymond he had been confined in the caſtles of Thenelworth and Corf, and one in Northumberland, where he had enjoyed the liberty of the platform, till once, at

at midnight, as he was venting in groans his ſad lot, he ſaw a perſon on the other ſide of the foſſe, who called to him, and at the inſtant he was going to aſk his aſſiſtance, the keeper, ſurpriſed at his abſence at an hour ſo unuſual, juſt then appeared, and he was obliged to retire, and that, a ſhort time before he beheld from his window an ancient figure gazing upon him from the wall, which ſurrounded the back part of the premiſes. This, doubtleſs, was Lambert, who, it may be remembered, had, in his firſt ſearch after Ella, been affected by the appearance and moans of ſome poor object; the other, De Vallenciennes, with tearful eyes, acknowledged muſt be himſelf. While they were mournfully converſing, the ſound of numerous footſteps aſcended from below.

"Now," ſaid the unhappy monarch, "now, indeed, my dear, my gallant friend, you will be torn from me—Adieu—Make no reſiſtance — It will be worſe for us both — Hark! I hear the clanking of chains—Go,

think not of me—My doom cannot be reverſed—I daily expect, and almoſt wiſh for, the meditated ſtroke—Surely it will not be long deferred." He then embraced the ſpeechleſs Raymond, quitted him, and retired to his pallet in dumb deſpair.

The noiſe was now heard upon the ſtairs, and more than twenty armed men crowded into the room merely to ſecure a defenceleſs priſoner. They ſeized him, and immediately loaded the diſtreſſed youth with fetters and handcuffs of a galling weight, then approaching the miſerable Edward, faſtened him to his wretched bed with chains of the ſame cruel form, and, cloſing the door, deſcended by the winding ſtairs till they entered the gallery. Here theſe were met by Gourney and Maltravers, who added to De Valenciennes's mortification by the loweſt and rudeſt ſarcaſms. He would have turned in ſullen ſilence towards his room, when Gourney ſtopping him, inſultingly, begged he would turn back, as *he* could not expect a better

better lodging than his *Royal Maſter*, though he commanded his attendants to releaſe his indignant priſoner from the chains of ignominy.

While this was tranſacting DeVallenciennes could not avoid noticing the officious, tho' cautious, nods and geſtures of one of them; but the preſence of Maltravers prevented any explanation, and the fellow retired apparently much diſſatisfied, and then opening a ſmall iron grate diſcovered another flight of ſteps, which led to a dungeon beneath the Tower. Here they left him a prey to ſuch emotions of rage as no hope could controul. There was a ſtone ſeat in the wall, but neither bed or furniture of any deſcription. — The dawn, which ſlowly lighted up this dreary place, brought no alleviation of ſorrow to the wretched Raymond, and the villain Maltravers, who ſoon after appeared with ſome refreſhment, obtained not a word from him.

At

At the expiration of a cold dreary day, another viſitor came with the information that he ſhould be liberated on the following morning. Raymond was not in love with miſery; he found a degree of conſolation in the idea that he ſhould be reſtored to his liberty, and felt determined, if poſſible, once more to viſit the noble captive. With this hope he ſupported himſelf with tolerable compoſure through the day, nor refuſed to taſte the viands his gaoler had left. Even the idea of Ella aroſe in his flattered imagination, throwing a tint of joy upon the heavy cloud of grief, and his meditations inſenſibly took a more cheerful caſt, while he procured to himſelf a freer reſpiration, and a genial warmth, by making uſe of the liberty he had gained in pacing up and down his dreary apartment, and in ſo doing found an additional advantage, as the damps (ariſing from the unpaved earth) which hung in drops upon the walls, would have rendered a total inaction extremely dangerous.

Thus

Thus paſſed the hours of a tedious *twilight* for the gloomy ſpaciouſneſs of a dungeon, enlightened only by a ſmall grate, about eight inches above the court, upon which it looked, could afford a very little idea of meridian day, and when that ſubſided a total darkneſs prevailed. It is true, they had left a lamp with the means of kindling it; but thoſe means the powerful vapours forbid, and Raymond was obliged to ſubmit to the preſent exigence, under the full hope of never again enduring ſimilar inconveniencies.

Tired with his inceſſant promenade, as well as wearied with the whirling ideas which floated in his brain, he would have tried to have lulled them to ſleep; but ſeating himſelf on the ſtone receptacle, its chilly coldneſs permitted not the indulgence, and he haſtily aroſe, bitterly inveighing againſt the wretches who had reduced him to endure ſuch painful circumſtances.

Night was now far advanced, and Raymond, in gloomy deſpondence, ſtood with his eyes fixed upon the little grate, through which he ſought in vain for a faint gleam of light from the ſtars, but all was impenetrably dark; when, ſuddenly ſtarting, he liſtened to a confuſed noiſe, which ſeemed to wind round the wall above his priſon, and at the ſame time he perceived the reflection of what appeared to be a torch waving againſt the high wall of the court, oppoſite the window where he ſtood. With an apprehenſive eye he watched the uncertain beam, ſometimes retiring, ſometimes renewed with freſh ſplendour.

It was ſtrange! The noiſe increaſed, and he could now diſtinguiſh the murmur of mens voices, which, as they continued to aſcend, became more feeble and indiſtinct, ſinking into ſilence, while the light reflecting upon the top of the building before him became ſtationary.

It

It was now exactly twelve, and the heavy ſound of the midnight bell on the turret above echoed round the ample court.

A dead ſtillneſs followed. The night was perfectly calm. Again the bell ſtruck upon Raymond's feelings, and, as the mournful notes rolled off in feeble reiteration, it ſeemed as the ſummons to death. It ceaſed, and while he wiped away the tear, which had unconciouſly gathered into his eye, he fancied, as he turned towards the interior of the dungeon, that ſhadows and ærial forms flitted before his eyes.

The deception was aſſiſted not only by his weakened ſpirits, but the faint gleam reflected from the wall without.

Thus then he ſtood involved in ſuch deep, though, perhaps, imaginary horror, as rendered his ſituation hardly to be endured, and again ſought the window as a tranſient refuge from the internal tumult; but he had

not ſtood many minutes, when a groan—ſo deep—ſo deadly—and prolonged by the melancholy fears, argued the commencement of a ſcene ſo diſmal, as lengthened every idea of dreadful import.

Raymond was ready to ſuppoſe it aroſe from behind him.—He looked round—but a ſecond ſucceeding, and terminating in a diſmal ſhriek, evidently appeared to deſcend from the turret.

The ſoul of the unhappy De Vallenciennes was appalled.—He dared not whiſper to his throbbing heart the ſuſpicions the horrid noiſe encouraged. A ſucceſſion of ſcreams followed.—The truth was flaſhed upon his agonized mind—cold ſweats bedewed his face—madneſs—deſperation ſeized his ſoul, and ſuperſeded fear.

"Ha! (he cried) the infernal butchers have begun the bloody work! Edward—dear

dear ſuffering martyr! I hear your piercing exclamations again. O curſed confinement!"

He then groped along the walls, in the vague hope of finding a door, which he might well ſuppoſe was too ſecurely faſtened to admit of his eſcape. It was ſome time before he diſcovered it. The lock was wood. Raymond ſeized it with more than mortal ſtrength; but the attempt was fruitleſs, and at laſt was obliged to give over, as he had lacerated his hands to a cruel degree, and irritated by the continuance of thoſe groans which now grew fainter.

He then ran wildly round the dungeon, and even ſhrieked from the vehemence of his own feelings, till ſinking into a momentary inſenſibility, he dropped upon the ſtone ſeat;—but the agitation he was under ſoon rouſed every power into action, and a diſtinct whiſpering near the door, while it could not increaſe his agony, indicated only another cauſe for it.

To his loud demand of "Who is there?" he was anſwered "A friend," and the door giving way, he diſcovered, by the light of a lamp, which he bore, the man, whoſe ſtrange emotions in the morning had raiſed Raymond's curioſity, with a fearful aſpect the poor fellow was ready to retreat from the figure that met his eyes: A countenance ſwollen with tears—pale—ghaſtly—wild—eyes gleaming with every furious paſſion—his hands ſtreaming with blood, which had been by his violent geſtures communicated to his face and garment; nor when this awful object ruſhed by him could he exert the ſmalleſt attempt to ſtop him; but gazed in ſilent aſtoniſhment after De Vallenciennes, who, impelled by the moſt extravagant idea, thought of nothing but aſſiſting his Royal Friend.

When he had gained the gallery, into which the ſtairs of the turret deſcended, he found the door opened, and, pauſing for a moment,

moment, plainly heard the faint, interrupt
ſobs—of approaching death.

" The conflict is almoſt over," cried
wretched youth, and a violent burſt of g
impeded his reſolution to witneſs this ſc
of terror; however, indignation renew
his ſpirits, he ſlowly aſcended the ſtairs,
entered the chamber without oppoſition.

On one ſide the pallet ſtood Maltrav
on the other Gourney. Several ſoldiers,
murderous aſpects, bent their fierce l
upon the bed. Raymond advanced.
one attempted to hinder him. All
ſilent, except the ſmothered, ſhort conv
heavings of the dying Edward, whoſe
was hidden by the torn and tumbled co
that appeared to be haſtily thrown ove
as De Vallenciennes went in . . . .
with a furious air he puſhed Maltraver
and throwing back the coverlet, found
tirely wet with perſpiration; a hand
unhappy monarch lying lifeleſs up

pillow, Raymond caught it to his boſom; it was filled with the ſhort buſhy hair of one of his aſſaſſins, the other graſped a portion of linen torn from the ſheet.

Though life ſeemed ready to vaniſh with every feeble reſpiration, the dying King faintly raiſed his beamleſs eye to the face of his almoſt broken-hearted friend, who, kneeling by the bedſide, kiſſed the clammy lips, and received, in one ſoft ſigh, the laſt breath of ſinking mortality, totally overcome by the various ſcenes of diſtreſs he had undergone. This ſhocking denouement entirely deſtroyed the little remnant of recollection Raymond had preſerved, and he gazed in ſtupid ſilence upon the diſtorted frame and contracted features of his dear, and ever to be lamented, King, while Gourney, and his infernal partner, took the opportunity of conveying him to the dungeon, in the firm hope that, when he was recovered from the heavy delirium that had benumbed his faculties, they ſhould be enabled to take advantage

advantage of it, ſo as to give the preſent direful event a more favourable appearance.

This hope was fully confirmed upon about two hours after when they viſited him. He aſked in unconnected terms for an explanation of a horrid viſion that he had ſeen. To this they anſwered with civility, and invited him to take poſſeſſion of his former chamber. Raymond accepted the offer; weak and languid, he had ſcarely revived to a ſenſe of his ſufferings when they entered, nor dared he poſitively aſſert the reality of the paſt tranſactions. His heart was loaded, but it was humbled, and he patiently ſubmitted to the wretch's command not to leave his room.

On the following morning, aſſiſted by ſleep, his mental powers were ſo far reſtored, as to bring forward every cruel incident which had deranged them.

He pondered—he groaned—he wept. — Revenge, the idea of revenge alone, poſ-

ſeſſed his ſoul; but while ſubject to the monſters, who had given riſe to ſuch intentions, it was imprudent to diſcover them, and he would only venture to try how far their authority would extend by walking in the gallery, when, juſt as he had reached the foot of the fatal turret ſtairs, he met Gourney, who ſpoke to him in terms of affected kindneſs. Maltravers likewiſe ſeemed to ſink *his* power in a tame ſervility.

The change was wonderful, but Raymond attributed it to the true cauſe. They had deſtroyed the miſerable Edward. They had gone beyond the refinement of torture, in the manner of his death, and this De Vallenciennes underſtood by the means of the good-natured creature who had opened his door on that awful night, and who happened now to be pitched upon to ſtand centinel at his chamber. From him he learned, that it was done by the command of Mortimer, who pointed out a dreadful expedient, by which they might avoid ſhedding any blood.

Raymond

Raymond had wondered at the change of conduct the murderers had obſerved to himſelf; but it was now plain they meant to paſs the Royal Martyr's death upon him as the effect of ſudden convulſions; but he was not to be ſo deceived, the anguiſh he had endured was viſible on the diſfigured countenance, and while De Vallenciennes regarded, with a penetrating eye, the black and briſtly locks which ſhaded Gourney's forehead, they brought to his remembrance thoſe he had obſerved in the compreſſed hand of his dying friend; nor could he forget ſome inſtruments of an uncommon form, which Maltravers haſtily ſnatched from the bed as he approached it. Induced by motives ſo forcible, he vowed over the *ſacred remains* a revenge deep, if poſſible, as the crime that cauſed it; for under the ſhallow pretence of accidental death, they permitted every one who choſe a ſight ſo mournful to look upon, and even examine the venerable corſe, which appeared to be free from any external act of violence.

CHAP. III.

The various Lot of Life,
Oft' from external Circumſtance aſſumes
A momentary diſpoſition to rejoice.

AKENSIDE.

THAT deep and heavy lethargy which generally ſucceeds the furious paroxyſm of grief hung with a torpid weight on Raymond's ſoul, rendering him almoſt regardleſs of his future fortune, and though reſtored to the liberty Lord Berkley at firſt accorded, he made little more uſe of it than to indulge the melancholy, which threatened to enervate

vate every faculty, by walking for hours under the window of the fatal theatre of death, reflecting on the horrid termination of his lamented Maſter's ſufferings, and almoſt fancying the low murmur of a wintry wind, for the means which had pierced his loyal heart.

The company of Gourney and Maltravers were deteſtable, and, though compelled to take his meals in their ſociety, he ever preſerved a ſullen and indignant ſilence to the ſervile attempts they made to gain his confidence.

Thus paſſed the dreary hours of a tedious captivity; nor did the riſing year promiſe any brighter proſpect; but it had ſcarcely commenced when De Vallenciennes experienced a pleaſure ſweet as unexpected. The honeſt centinel, lately mentioned, who was now his conſtant attendant, and whoſe artleſs obſervations ſometimes lightened the houſe of his hopeleſs impriſonment, entered the chamber with an air of uncommon cheerfulneſs,

fulneſs, rubbing his hands, and moving forwards with an aſſured ſtep:

"I have ſome good news for my Lord," ſaid he.—"They are ſent for," and then nodding his head with much ſagacity—"They'll have it.—They are going.—Yes, yes, we ſhall have it all our own way. They want a guard truly: I wiſh I was one. — The King-killing raſcal.—I'd let him know: — But mark, my Lord—mark, I ſay — they will be met with.—It's all over the country. Our young King, God bleſs him, begins to ſuſpect. He has ordered them to give an account."

"I ſuppoſe," interrupted De Vallenciennes, you mean Gourney and Maltravers?"

"I do, I do, my Lord, and what is better? Sir Joſelin Tracy comes to-morrow to take the command; but won't you go down, and bid them farewell. The horſes are ready; they are going directly. Raymond

mond could not ſuſpect Ambroſe of a wiſh to teaze him; but he was almoſt angry."

"Would I could annihilate them," cried he, indignantly, "then would I go with pleaſure."

"There they go, my Lord," obſerved Ambroſe. Ay, ay," looking through the window, "you will be met with."

Ambroſe was ready to ſet up a ſhout of joy when the outer gates were cloſed againſt them, while his Lord vented his execrations on the wretches as they deſcended the hill, and heartily prayed they might meet with the reward due to their diabolical cruelty.

The departure of theſe miſcreants, and the arrival of Sir Joſelin, once more opened to Raymond's heart a ſource of comfort; — nay, the freedom he now enjoyed added to the reſpectful, and even affectionate, atten-

tion

tion of the new Governor, overcame the oppreſſive melancholy which hitherto oppoſed every approach of tyrannical hope, and his ſpirits almoſt recovered their uſual tone.

To his affecting deſcription of Edward's deplorable end, Sir Jocelin offered the tribute of a faithful ſubject. The tear he ſhed was grateful to the ſoul of Raymond—for it proved his loyalty — and to give a ſtill further teſtimony of his attachment to the companions of his juvenile years, ſuperadded a permiſſion to hunt, when the weather was mild enough—for he doubted not the nobleneſs of his priſoner's principles—nor ſcrupled to put the higheſt confidence in his promiſe, which Raymond had freely given not to exceed the bounds preſcribed by the Governor, who generally indeed attended him upon theſe occaſions—and at other times felt the higheſt ſatisfaction in the full enjoyment of the privilege of reading—as the library belonging to Lord Berkley was open to his ſucceſſors.

ſucceſſors.—Thus employed and amuſed, the hours ſtole off diveſted of their uſual load. The days too ſlowly increaſed.—An early honey-ſuckle beneath the window of the ſtudy, which looked upon a ſpacious garden, already portended the opening bud.—The ſnow had melted upon the diſtant hills, and they began to aſſume their uſual tint. — The long avenues ſheltered with walls of ever-greens, ſmooth and regular as art could make them, became agreeable to Raymond's taſte, and he often ſtrolled along the pebbled walks, while the returning ſun diffuſed a mid-day warmth.—Snow-drops, violets, and prim-roſes, gave a gay variety to the ſcene—and while he ſometimes ſighed to the remembrance of active life, he would indulge a latent wiſh for the blooming and elegant Ella's ſociety, which would give a lively tint to the beauties around, and reconcile him to the deprivation of the power and ſplendour he had once poſſeſſed.

The

The appearance of Sir Jocelin haſtening down the avenue, as Raymond was penſively enjoying his noon-day walk, promiſed unuſual intelligence, he was yet at ſome diſtance; but the quickneſs of his ſtep, and a packet which he held in his hand, denoted ſomething extraordinary, and as ſoon as he was fully within hearing—the words—"Pardon—full and free pardon—inſtant liberty," were eaſily diſtinguiſhed—the friends now met.

"Here, my honoured Lord, read this—It is from Lord Berkley, and this (holding out another) is from London.—The villains are puniſhed, and you are free."—De Vallenciennes lifted up his heart in thankfulneſs.

Gourney and Maltravers had met with ſomething like retribution; they had been ordered up to London by the abetters of their crimes to receive the ſtipulated reward. When the populace, who were enraged at the propagation of thoſe reports, which had been

been encouraged reſpecting the unhappy Edward's criminalty, and who were unſatisfied as to the cauſe of his premature death, not only ſuſpected the integrity of his late keepers; but, as with that ſort of people, ſuſpicion is confirmation—they became extremely clamorous for the puniſhment of the regicides, and the principals in the horrid tranſaction, fearful for their own ſafety, readily committed them to priſon, where they remained for ſeveral weeks; but as a full examination into this dark buſineſs was delayed upon various pretences, the people, eager and impatient, broke into the place of confinement, and, after a mock trial, hung them before the gates.—This was information that accounted for Sir Jocelin's tranſport; but the emancipation of his friend required a complete ſenſe of the benefit that young man was to receive to render it agreeable to the Governor; yet he was generous, and ſuppreſſed every ſhew of reluctance in his congratulation.

Raymond,

Raymond, after expreſſing the moſt ſincere thankfulneſs for news that ſo truly gratified his patriotic ſoul, adverted to Lord Berkley's letter; but he had ſcarcely read ſix lines, when the name of *Ella* met his eye.

"*Ella*—a priſoner at Mortimer Hall! —Subject to the rigorous treatment of a haughty Queen, and the object of Mortimer's illicit flame!"

"O it was too much."—He threw down the paper.

"A horſe, dear Tracey—this moment—My life for a horſe—You ſay I am free—My brain is in tumults—and yet what can I do?—But at leaſt I may try."

Sir Jocelin reſpectfully withdrawing to fulfil this abrupt command, Raymond went up to his chamber, and there went through a little narrative, that awakened every ſpark of that impetuoſity which only ſeemed ſtifled till

till the breath of paſſion revived the almoſt extinguiſhed flame.

" I call upon your patience," continues his Lordſhip's letter, " while recounting myſteries, which even now I cannot truly elucidate; therefore, without much comment, ſhall confine myſelf merely to the relation, and hope the confidence you repoſed in my principles will not be repented of, ſince it has ſuch wonderful events.—The atrocious murder of our ſacred Monarch produced the greateſt contrariety of effects in this palace.—The Queen, whom I am juſtified in aſſerting, that ſhe only affected to ſhed tears, withdrew to a private apartment, to conſult her minion upon the propereſt mode of announcing it to the public; but the Counteſs of Lancaſter, to whom, as to an ancient and honourable friend, I had entruſted your ſad hiſtory, was abſolutely convulſed with grief when the terrible intelligence reached her, and for ſeveral days refuſed conſolation, and even ſuſtenance; but when the agonies ſhe had ſuſtained

tained ſubſided, for want of ſtrength to feed them, I ventured to aſk an audience, and was readily admitted. She looked wildly at me, and ſunk into a languor ſo deep that I was neceſſitated to retire, and for two months her ſituation made a friendly viſit impoſſible; but as convaleſcence returned, ſhe requeſted my attendance.—I obeyed.—She put a packet into my hands.

"Convey," ſhe ſaid, "this to your unfortunate young friend. The Queen, at my earneſt requeſt, gives him unlimited liberty. You are no ſtranger to his mournful ſituation.—Tell him *I* muſt ſee him.—O Lord Berkley—much—very much of the peace of my future life depends upon an adherence to my requeſt.—He is free to go to Spencer Houſe.—Ranulph dare not prevent him.—The lettters he told you of are neceſſary to the elucidation of every thing.—Let him bring them hither.—Tell him, Lord Berkley, that the Counteſs of Lancaſter conſoles herſelf—for a loſs otherwiſe irreparable, with

the

the idea of doing eſſential ſervice to the faithful ſubject of her ever to be lamented King, and that the lovely Ella you tell me of is — But I will no farther anticipate."

Thus did the noble Lady expreſs, in unconnected terms, her wiſhes, commands, and expectations; need I then urge your ſpeedy departure from Berkley Caſtle?

" I have written theſe few lines in my honoured friend's preſence, whom I have left weeping over them, and whoſe ſeal it bears."

EDMUND EARL BERKLEY.

The preſence of Sir Jocelin, who had performed his peremptory requeſt, curbed for one moment the burning impatience that would have induced him to quit the Caſtle without ſuch preparation as might leſſen the inconvenience of ſo long a journey; but even this delay, ſimply conſidered, was unconſequential; and Raymond, attended by

the centinel Ambroſe, who earneſtly entreated he might be permitted to follow him, left that ſcene of ſuffering and torture, as the old clock ſtruck four, not without caſting a lingering and melancholy look at the diſmal grate, through which the poor emaciated viſage of his royal friend had often been ſeen.—By a hint reſpecting Ranulph—De Vallenciennes was led to imagine he ſhould encounter ſome difficulty, in the proſecution of his deſign to viſit that chamber which concealed the important papers.—The implication of Ranulph's want of *power* did not extend to a want of *will*, and he fatally experienced what that will could effect; what then ſhould prevent an exertion of that *power* which had before purſued him to priſon—almoſt to death?—What—but the reſtriction of ſuperior might—for undoubtedly the news of his liberation would reach the metropolis before his appearance could corroborate it, and he ſhould be no longer conſidered as the proſcribed traitor, ſince his pardon had been ſigned by both the Regents,

for as ſuch the Queen and Mortimer had already acted, and ſuch was their influence, that, however painful the enforcement of obedience was to the noble and patriotic few who had ſurvived the rage of contending parties—prudence, and the moſt profound policy, juſtified their ſubmiſſion at leaſt while the young King's minority continued, which ſeemed already verging to its cloſe—as he had been ſome months married, and began openly to cenſure the deteſtable connexion which diſgraced his royal extraction, throwing a ſhadow upon the purity of his right to a crown that required the cleareſt and moſt honourable claim.

Thus then the power of Ranulph was done away, and private attempts upon his perſon he feared not. The tranquillity which reflection reſtored to Raymond's mind, threw a ſofter tint upon the featutes of the ſurrounding landſcape civil war had happily ſuſpended its devaſtation; already the crops were riſing in the vallies—already the ſwelling hills diſ-

played a pleaſing ſcene—the rich and juicy, though ſhort, herbage preſented ſupport for the numerous flocks that ſpread over their well clothed ſides, and fed in ſafety.

Raymond ſighed as the luxurient ſcene reminded him of a melancholy contraſt.—He thought of Lambert, and determined, ſhould fortune once more offer her treaſures to his acceptance, Lambert's future comforts ſhould be ſecured.—Very natural was the tranſition from Lambert to Ella;—all the myſtery of her fate was about to be inveſtigated, and *he*—delightful thought—was appointed to elucidate it; but wherefore did the Counteſs of Lancaſter ſo ſtrenuouſly ſupport her cauſe; and ſtill more wonderful, why did ſhe expreſs ſuch anxiety for him to whom ſhe was totally a ſtranger, giving him the importance which Deſpencer's ruin had nearly annihilated? The thread of reflection run no longer clear, and yet he purſued it. Suppoſing Ella was diſtinguiſhedly noble—ſuppoſe his own birth equally great—what would

would that do in their preſent ſituation? *His* real motive for viſiting Mortimer Hall would be decently covered by the oſtenſible one of humbling himſelf in gratitude to the Regents. Yes, Ella would be ſtill the priſoner of pride and paſſion.—The clue broke; he could follow it no farther; his breath was almoſt ſuſpended while recollecting Mortimer's ungovernable diſpoſition, and the Queen's propenſity to proud vindictive jealouſy.

This was a ſubject ſo inimical to his former calmneſs, that nothing leſs than the hope he could ſcarcely indulge was neceſſary to enliven his deſpondency; for even this hope, ſo much enveloped, allowed not any certain relief to his gloomy ideas—depriving the concluſion of his journey of the ſweet expectations which had enlivened the early part of it; but now the gothic roof of Weſtminſter Abbey looking majeſtically ſolemn over the inferior buildings that ſurrounded it, and marking the ſtately reſidence of his revered Deſpencer, ſuſpended his diſ-

agreeable meditations, and putting his horſe to full ſpeed, Raymond left the wondering Ambroſe ſtupidly perplexed how to follow the track his Lord had taken:—However, he contrived to recover it time enough to follow him into the court before the houſe, where Ranulph—aſtoniſhed—and even terrified—met his abrupt viſitant as he entered the maſſy gates, who, void at that moment of every neceſſary caution, adverted not to the danger of his ſituation.

CHAP.

CHAP. IV.

Shall I then—who have ſlighted death,
And courted danger in the duſty field,
Decline it now in ſuch a noble cauſe,
When love and honour lead the glorious way?

OWEN.

IT was true Ranulph had juſt heard the news of Raymond's deliverance, and was ſtanding at the great door ruminating vexedly upon an event that ſeemed to ſtrike at his ſafety — when the unexpected appearance deranged the haſty plan he was forming, and left nothing in his power but an attempt,

by a ſervility natural to his temper, to ſoften the rage he dreaded. It looked ſomewhat ſtrange that the place, in which the injured young man had received inſults of ſuch a baſe complexion, ſhould be the firſt he ſhould fearleſsly ſeek, and was a truth ſo mortifying to the baſe uſurper as nothing could exceed, excepting the fierce contempt with which his awkward and inſincere congratulations were received.

De Vallenciennes darted a look at the treacherous deceiver, compriſing indignation and reſentment; and haſtily following the impetuoſity of unreſtrained curioſity, ran up the great ſtaircaſe, ſtopping, with a beating heart, in the anti-room leading to Deſpencer's bed-chamber.

Recollection now urged the abſurdity of his behaviour.—He was in view of the apartment containing what on earth he was juſt then moſt eager to poſſeſs; but in whoſe houſe, and what reaſon was to be given to cover

cover the real motive—for thus ruſhing, without apology, or even checking the pride that forbid an anſwer to the apparent civility, into his enemy's domain.

While thus employed, the very object of his perplexity appeared, and having now ſettled within himſelf the mode he ought to purſue, once more ſtrove to conciliate what he could not defend.

This reconciled every thing, and Raymond relaxed ſo much of his hauteur, as to accept what it would have been impolitic to refuſe, hinting, at the ſame time, as a reaſon for his viſit—a predilection in favour of the place in which he had paſſed much of his childhood.

Ranulph departed evidently ſatisfied with his gueſt, though convinced there was a myſtery in his manner, which agreed not with the apparent motive for his coming there.

He had not remained many minutes alone, when Ambroſe brought an invitation to his maſter to partake of dinner that was juſt then ſerving; but Raymond ſlightly ſending his thanks, requeſted only a ſingle plate in that room, the windows of which commanding a view of the Thames, the Surry hills, and part of Kent, diverſified with woods and commons, made the ſituation too intereſting to be quitted.

His requeſt was immediately complied with, and he was himſelf freed from the neceſſity of practiſing the inſincerity his ſoul abhorred.

Fearful of gratifying the uppermoſt wiſh of his heart, till midnight ſhould ſecure him from diſcovery, he endeavoured to attend to the lovely view before him.—The ſun was declining, and tinted the various objects with that mild yellow light ſo grateful to the lover of nature.—He watched the lengthening ſhadows as they ſtole up the ſides of the

the riſing grounds, till the vallies were left in ſoft obſcurity, and unconſciouſly ſighed as they became fully enveloped in the brown umbrage of evening, which ſoon overſpreading the face of things, induced a not unpleaſing melancholy that gradually ſtole over Raymond's mind, who ſhutting the window felt a ſolemn awe impreſs his ſpirits as he looked into the gloomy chamber beyond.

The warning he had heard from thence ſo prophetically given, and ſo often repeated, now ruſhed, tinted with ſuperſtition, upon his mind; in fact, it induced a ſomething rather derogatory to the dignity of a ſoldier, and he was aſhamed to ſuppoſe the timely entrance of his ſervant had power to bring relief, who, placing lights upon the table, waited with a ſort of impatient ſilence for his maſter's farther commands, who, to his great mortification, ſeemed more diſpoſed for reflection than communication, and Ambroſe cared not to venture an impetuous repulſe, ſuch as he had more than once incurred during their journey.—Another meſſage from Ranulph to his viſitor, reſpectfully informing

him ſupper was ready, met with a civil refuſal, as he only meant to take a cup of wine, a variety of the beſt being placed before him, and then indignantly accuſing his momentary want of fortitude, Raymond commanded his man to leave him for the night.

Ambroſe lingered, and looking as though he had ſomething to communicate, offered to attend his Lord till the hour of repoſe; but receiving a haſty negative to his wiſh, the poor fellow very reluctantly withdrew, while the female attendants were preparing the bed in which he was to ſleep—De Valenciennes applied, though with much moderation, to the generous juice of the grape, and, with the aſſiſtance of a book that he had taken from the library adjoining, contrived to paſs the hours very tolerably till the clock from the Abbey ſtruck twelve. —

Every one in the houſe he conjectured were now retired, and the ſtillneſs which prevailed corroborated that opinion: Riſing, therefore, with recovered reſolution he haſtened to the cloſet, where every thing appeared much as

he had left them, except that the pannel had been ſo exactly cloſed, that he could not fix with any certainty upon the right; but gently ſtriking the wainſcot, he endeavoured to diſcover it by the ſound, at laſt ſucceeded, and drew it back with a tremulous motion, immediately pulling out the drawer which he remembered to contain the conſequential papers.—He pulled it out, but it was empty. The others were eagerly examined.—Not a letter was left.—The cabinet, perhaps.—Yes, they were undoubtedly removed into that. Thus he thought—but there was nothing of conſequence in the part which he could get at, and the interior drawers were impenetrable.—He ſtood for a moment petrified with horror, when the blood, which his agonizing diſappointment had nearly deprived of motion, again ruſhed in torrents to his throbbing heart, while reflections, wild and unconnected, though tinctured with the blackeſt hue of deſpair, whirled through his beating brain; and his fatal impetuoſity urged him to

the acts of a maniac: Wild therefore with expectation of he knew not what—the imprudent Raymond left the closet, and determined to seek Ranulph, to charge him with the deed, and force him to disclose the secret hinted at by Despencer.

He then hastily opened the door of the anti-room, and forgetting, in his thoughtless frenzy, the necessity of a light, turned towards the stairs; but had not gone far, when, by a faint gleam which streamed from the lamps he had left, Raymond perceived a figure standing close against the wall, as it were to let him pass; but in the present situation of his mind a legion of foes could scarcely have subdued his frantic passion.

Indeed, the creature he now encountered seemed, by the motion of his teeth, which were easily heard through his excessive agitation, to feel more terror than it was in his nature to inflict, and when he felt himself fiercely

fiercely collared, could ſcarcely articulate an anſwer to the violent demand of

"Who he was, and what his buſineſs was in that place?"

As well, however, as he could ſpeak, he conjured his interrogator, for the Holy Virgin's ſake, to be ſilent.

"I have waited continued he, in a trembling accent) till the family were retired to ſpeak to my Lord; but not being certain it was you who came out of that chamber, thought I had better let you paſs; pray then give me a patient audience."

The earneſt, and almoſt breathleſs, manner in which this was uttered, abſolutely forced attention, and rather checked the fiery tumult of ſoul that had impelled De Vallenciennes to ſuch a ſtrange purpoſe.

He

He ſtood ſuſpended, while the man went on to requeſt him to return, adding, that what he had to ſay was of the greateſt import; but he received a heſitating refuſal, which was quickly retracted, for a light appearing from the oppoſite ſide of the hall, where a door opened upon a paſſage leading to the ſervants offices, convinced Raymond there was ſomething in agitation which concerned him to know, particularly as the man caught his ſleeve, and reſpectfully urged him to go back, for that it was highly dangerous to ſtay :—Still he lingered, for the idea of danger to him was (in the ferment of paſſion not wholly allayed) ſomewhat ridiculous, and his eye followed the perſon who bore the light as he croſſed towards the ſtairs, till he was involved in darkneſs, and was plainly heard to aſcend them.

The extinction of the lamp increaſed Ambroſe's fears and entreaties, for he it was who had thus impeded his maſter's intention; but

but a very little conſideration was ſufficient to prove it moſt probable that this was a ſervant who had poſſibly remained up later than he wiſhed to be known, and before he had gained the gallery Ambroſe had joyfully cloſed the door.—Raymond, who was ill-diſpoſed to liſten to the effuſions of a terrified and ignorant imagination, and who felt the agony of his heart again return, ſharply reproved his ſervant for giving way to ſuch cowardly fancies.

The poor man would have anſwered, when a ſlight noiſe interrupted the intelligence he was about to communicate, and he caſt a fearful look towards the door; but a voice begging admittance relieved his apprehenſions, and he immediately opened it, ſaying, "He knew who it was."

"I know," ſaid the ſtranger, as he entered, "that this intruſion muſt greatly alarm my Lord; but the reaſons I have to give are

are ſo ſtrong, that I am ſure, when he hears them, I ſhall be forgiven.—He then, turning to the light, exhibited features not altogether unknown to the agitated youth, though where he had ſeen them it was impoſſible to aſcertain, and he ſuffered the man to proceed, who, lowering his voice, aſſured him that his life was threatened; for Ranulph had, in his hearing, confirmed, with horrid execrations, his reſolution to deſtroy his unwelcome viſitor.

"I have (added he) unqueſtionable authority for what I ſay, and meant to have explained my meaning to your Lordſhip; but as my buſineſs is to watch in the court next the ſtreet, and the hour is nearly expired, when I ſhall be expected to give it out under my maſter's window, I muſt defer my intelligence till that is done, when I will directly return.—Mean time your Lordſhip's ſervant will."

"Yes—yes (ſaid Ambroſe) you may go. Hark! the clock ſtrikes—you will hardly be able

able to reach the court in time."—So ſaying, he ſhut the door upon the ſtranger, who ſoftly creeping away, was ſoon out of hearing.

Raymond now traverſed the room in that perplexity, which ſo many concomitant circumſtances of diſappointment, vexation, doubt, and even *terror*, induced; for notwithſtanding the boldneſs of his ſpirit increaſed too by the bitterneſs of his fallen hopes, there was a ſomewhat in the voice of his viſitant, which conveyed, though he knew not why, a ſenſation ſimilar to thoſe he felt in his laſt unfortunate excurſion to this place.—True, the voice was neither hollow nor deep; but there was an apparent likeneſs in the tones, which ſtruck him, and rather abated the ferocity of his preſent temper; but a recurrence to the above ſtate of his proſpects prevailed, and ſelf-accuſation formed the ground of the whole for the temerity of again truſting to a known foe, almoſt unattended, though

though well armed, was clearly indefenſible, and it was no imputation of the higheſt courage to ſay, the dread of aſſaſſination entered likewiſe into his liſt of mortifications, and the whole taken together produced ſuch a reſtleſſneſs, that the kind-hearted Ambroſe ventured to interrupt the dreadful ſilence by obſervations, calculated as *he* meant, to give him confidence and peace.

CHAP.

CHAP. V.

Imagination, thou doſt ſtab to th' centre.
Thou doſt make poſſible things—not be ſo held
With what's unreal thou coactive art.

SHAKESPEARE.

THE ſuppoſitions and remonſtrances offered by his ſervant effectually forced aſunder the links of ideas which Raymond had been joining ſo aſſiduouſly, and he looked rather impatient, when Ambroſe obſerved, "if every one had their deſerts, *that* brave fellow need not be obliged to watch for one who had uſed him ſo ill.

"Nay,

"Nay, my Lord (continued he) *you* above all folks, if what he ſay is true, are indebted to him."

"To whom?" ſaid his Lordſhip, in a peeviſh accent.

"Why, my Lord, it was he, who informed the old Lord Deſpencer of the danger he was in.—When he laſt left London; I am ſure my heart ached to ſee how eager he was to get a peep at your Lordſhip when you alighted, and indeed I wanted to ſpeak of this before, and what he told me about that maſter Ranulph; ſo that made me try to ſee you to night, and I was half an hour in the gallery before your door was open, for I could not find it in the dark.—A ſudden ray of recollection cleared up and explained Ambroſe's intelligence, and Raymond wondered he ſhould not have diſcovered features which a ſenſe of obligation ought to have imprinted upon his memory."

"Poor

" Poor fellow (ſaid he) I am truly ſorry to ſee him in a ſituation that I cannot at preſent amend; it ſeems as if the honeſt creature was born for my preſervation."

" I think ſo too," ſaid Ambroſe, who, encouraged by a motion from his maſter, had taken off a large cup of wine, and was in the act of renewing his draught.—" I think ſo too," he cried, taking the cup from his mouth; " for this is the ſecond job your Lordſhip owes him for."

" The ſecond!" replied De Vallenciennes, who paſſed over the freedom of his obſervation in his eagerneſs to underſtand him.

" Why, my Lord, what I ſay is very true, only you would not take his advice."

" If I had *not* taken his advice, Ambroſe, my ſorrows would long ere now have terminated."

" As

" As to the ſorrow of the matter, my Lord, here," pouring out another cup, "this, obſerve me, this is a cure for all ſorrow; but it would not ſtifle fear; for Ambroſe ſuddenly letting fall the cup, fixed his eye upon the inner room, as though expecting the moſt horrible appearance; nor was his Lord a little ſurpriſed at hearing a heavy noiſe like the cloſing of a door, which ſeemed beneath them."

Ambroſe's apprehenſions were wound up to a pitch of diſtraction, when he beheld a human face peeping fearfully from the cloſet, while Raymond, in that awful moment, remembered the warning voice.

That part of the room was rather obſcured by the bed curtains, and the only lamp which Ambroſe had placed upon the table by his maſter's command (who, previous to his ſervant's intelligence, had ordered him to fetch his piſtols which he had left

left there) glimmered but faintly upon the object of his fears, though plain enough to identify it to them as they ſtood near the entrance of the chamber, from whence they could dimly diſcern the whole of the gloomy apartment. — The object now quitted the cloſet, and was cautiouſly advancing, when De Vallenciennes drew his ſword, and was darting forward, but Ambroſe recovering his ſuſpended breath, cried out:

" It is Edred — it was indeed Edred, who not half an hour before had left them to give out the hour, and as he immediately informed them, choſe not to venture through the great hall again, leſt he ſhould be heard; but being acquainted with a private ſtair-caſe, which had been erected ſince Deſpencer had quitted the houſe, thought he had better come that way."

" And what (ſaid Raymond, eagerly) do they lead to? And wherefore were they built?"

" Of

"Of that I know not (anſwered Edred;) but your Lordſhip may remember the dungeon ſet apart for thoſe criminals who had groſsly offended our Lord, which runs under this ſide of the houſe, and which *I* very lately occupied."

"*You!*" interrupted Raymond, his aſtoniſhment increaſing as the man went on.

"Yes, my Lord."

"Be ſeated, Edred. Take ſome refreſhment, and then proceed. I am particularly intereſted in your information."

Edred obeyed, and Ambroſe thought the fright he had ſo recently endured a ſufficient excuſe for pledging his friend who thus went on.—After my honoured Lords had eſcaped from their enemies, the ſervants were all ſtrictly examined. The clearneſs of their evidence ſoon acquitted them; but as I could not

not, when it came to my turn, avoid betraying ſome confuſion, they committed me to the dungeon, where I lay till after your Lordſhip was betrayed by our infamous maſter.

"Were *you* then (ſaid Raymond, haſtily) were *you* in that dungeon at the time of my laſt viſit here? Perhaps—but no, that is impoſſible: However, go on."

Edred obeyed. — "The death of the King, and the intereſt of maſter Ranulph, who bought this confiſcated eſtate, was the cauſe of my deliverance; but though my maſter did not think me guilty, he never took much notice of me, till yeſterday after dinner, when he made a horrible propoſal, owing, as I ſuppoſe, to the hope that, as he had ſet me at liberty, I would not ſcruple to return the favour by loading my conſcience with murder."

"And pray in what manner were you to execute his diabolical commands?"

"By poiſon, my Lord.—The ſewer he dared not truſt, ſo I was appointed to take his employment for a few days, while he went to viſit his family in Eſſex."

Raymond ſhuddered.—"My good fellow, (ſaid he) how—how ſhall I reward you for your unexampled integrity, ſince I am fated to be diſappointed in every expectation; but though my preſent ſituation is inimical even to hope——."

"Ceaſe, my Lord, I am well paid—if you eſcape—which—if you are willing to do—I will prepare your horſes directly, and you may quit the houſe through the private paſſage, which I meant to tell your Lordſhip communicates with the dungeon."

The mention of the dungeon recalled a ſuſpicion which De Vallenciennes wiſhed to elucidate.

elucidate. It might be Edred who had given the friendly, though ineffectual, warning; but when he aſked the momentous queſtion, the anſwer he received increaſed the myſtery that now became yet more perplexing.

"It was not me you heard, my Lord: I was in the loweſt room of the dungeon, for it has two apartments; the upper one receives light from a grated aperture in the pavement of the court, on which the windows of that chamber looks; the other has not any, but through ſome iron bars in the flooring of that above; yet (ſaid Raymond, with a beating heart) I *did* hear a voice, and even fancied this night that yours reſembled it; were there any priſoners in the upper part?"

"Yet (ſaid Edred, after a pauſe) there was one who I did hear had been there for ſeveral years; but though I could hear him

groan and ſigh, yet ſo was the grate in the floor contrived, that I never ſaw him but I think the night before I was ſet at liberty I heard him ſpeak ſeveral times."

"I will detain you no longer (ſaid De Vallenciennes;) the day begins to dawn—I will accept your offer, and fly the treacherous monſter."

Edred was viſibly delighted with the reſolution, and applied himſelf to rouſe Ambroſe, who, during the latter part of their diſcourſe, was impelled, by the free potations he had ſwallowed, to give way to his inclination for a repoſe, and very reluctantly obeyed his Lord's poſitive commands to follow Edred, and aſſiſt in preparing for their departure.

While Raymond waited in ſullen deſpair for the ſignal agreed upon for his deſcending the ſteps leading to the private paſſage, by which his truſty informer aſcended, he adverted

verted to the intelligence communicated by Edred, reſpecting the priſoner ſuppoſed to be confined in the dungeon.—It was true, Raymond had not paſſed much of his youth in London, but enough of it to know, as he imagined, every tranſaction of importance negociated within thoſe walls; nor was his benefactor's revenge, upon any occaſion, ſtrong enough to ſupport a vindictive reſolution for the length of time hinted at by Edred.—It was barely admiſſible likewiſe, that the inhabitant of that melancholy abode ſhould have found no opportunity of making himſelf known to De Vallenciennes, as he had formerly paſſed his window; but as it was placed extremely high, and ſecured with leaning ſhutters that declined from the upper part of the wall, ſo as to admit the light while it excluded any correſpondence with exterior objects—it ſupported the poſſibility of the theſis without confirmation; and if ſo, might not the warning he had heard by a combination of equally perplexed circum-

ſtances be derived from the ſource he ſuſpected?

While thus involved in doubtful conjecture, he heard the ſignal for departure, and, haſtily ariſing, entered the cloſet, while, with a hopeleſs heart, he again ran over the contents of the cabinet, but without ſucceſs, and a ſecond ſignal, conſiſting of ſmall ſtones thrown againſt the window of the bed-chamber, obliged him to quit the luckleſs ſpot.

Taking therefore a lamp for the purpoſe of exploring a paſſage, otherwiſe totally dark, he began to deſcend; but coming to a ſtep deeper than the reſt, he fell, and bruiſed his ſhoulder againſt a large wooden lock, which faſtened an oaken door leading from the landing on which he had fallen.

Here then he pauſed, and, hearing a murmuring noiſe within, was convinced it opened to the dungeon; but the ſight of Edred,

Edred, who came to haſten him, forbid the indulgence of a ſomething more than curioſity, which was very reluctantly repreſſed, and following his faithful conductor, they ſilently paſſed the ſervants offices into the ſtreet, where Raymond was ſurpriſed to find *three* horſes, attended by Ambroſe: Before his Lord could aſk the motive for furniſhing an additional ſteed, Edred briefly told him, the grooms, who were then riſen, expreſſed a ſuſpicion that rendered it dangerous for him to ſtay behind; therefore, with De Valenciennes's permiſſion, he would follow his deſperate fortune.

His requeſt was acceded to with pleaſure, and they immediately quitted the metropolis with a ſpeed that defied a preſent purſuit.

To go to Mortimer Houſe was no longer the object of Raymond's contemplation; the ſeat of Sir Jocelin Tracy ſeemed to promiſe an aſylum extremely deſirous to one in his

perplexed circumſtances.—It was a beautiful little habitation at Morpeth, within twenty miles of Lambert's cottage.—There he was now ſure of a welcome reception, though not altogether ſo certain of meeting its reſpectable owner, who, he ſuppoſed, had not yet left Berkley, and from thence he could eaſily make his intended viſit to poor Lambert.

Thus determined, he entered the great North road, travelling with unceaſing expedition over the dreary moors of Yorkſhire and Northumberland, which, even in the full bloom of ſpring, preſented no object intereſting enough to engage his attention, and ſafely arrived at Morpeth, where he was gratified with the ſociety of his eſtimable friend, whoſe buſineſs at Berkley was terminated by a relation of Lord Berkley's taking upon himſelf the government of the Caſtle, till that Nobleman's attendance at Mortimer-Houſe was diſpenſed with.

By

By Sir Jocelin's advice, the truſty Edred was immediately diſpatched with letters to his Lordſhip and the Counteſs of Lancaſter, with a full deſcription of his reception, diſappointment, and eſcape from Spencer-Houſe, ſoliciting, with grateful reſpect, their farther directions, and whether he might ſafely be admitted to pay his allegiance where yet his warm and noble ſpirit ſhuddered to owe it; for was it not to Mortimer and his paramour, was it not to the worſt of regicides, his preſent enfranchiſement muſt be attributed. — He ſighed a confirmation to the fact, which was indiſputable, and derived comfort more from the idea that his ſufferings had ſecured powerful friends in the perſons of Berkley and the gracious Counteſs than in the freedom he now enjoyed, clogged as it was with apprehenſions he could neither ſhake off, or clearly identify.

The myſteries reſpecting his lovely Ella's fate ſeemed now involved in deeper gloom

than ever, and Raymond burned with impatience for his faithful meſſenger's return, whoſe route croſſing a wild and uncultivated tract, made it tedious and uncertain; but to elude, in ſome meaſure, the wearifome hours of expectation, he reſolved upon his propoſed viſit to the cottage, and, accompanied by Sir Jocelin, reached the entrance of the great wood, extending along the hill to the left of it, and, by taking the neareſt direction, ſoon found themſelves before the little manſion.

The door ſtood open, but all within was ſilent as death. The fields had been recently cultivated, and was covered with that deep verdure ſo peculiar to the ſucculent blades of the riſing corn.—The pales and front of the building were repaired and painted, and an additional lean-to, intended for a dairy, gave the cot a more reſpectable appearance, while the early honey-ſuckle, in its fulleſt bloom, climbing about the windows, and nicely

nicely pruned, diffuſed its ſweets over the whole.—Several cows were grazing near the ſpot, and from the many inſtruments of huſbandry ſcattered about, added to an unuſual air of delicacy in the new furniture of the lower room, Raymond had room to ſuppoſe the place had changed its owner, and that poor Lambert, worn out with age, was now at peace.

While he was balancing whether to return or ſtay till ſome one appeared, Sir Joſelin, who had ſtepped a few paces from him, haſtily beckoned, as he ſtood under a large tree, which formed a part of the wood, and pointing to a thicket beyond, directed his eye to a female figure, whoſe back being towards them, offered but little information as to her age or perſon.—It is undoubtedly, obſerved Raymond, as I expected, the ancient inhabitants are no more, and that perſon appears to be the proprietor of the cottage.—While he was ſpeaking, ſhe turned

towards the ſpot where they ſtood, and perceiving ſtrangers, plunged, with apparent confuſion, into a thicker part of the wood.

" It is Ella (exclaimed Raymond) or her ſhadow!" and then darting from his friend, purſued the path ſhe had taken, and ſoon perceived her flying before him.—He then ſtopped, fearful of the conſequence of her terror, and calling, in the moſt perſuaſive tone, entreated her merely to anſwer a queſtion.—She then looked back—alas! for Raymond—it was not his Ella, but a woman of more than twice her age.

Her countenance, ſallow to an extreme, impreſſed with a ſettled grief, and an aſſemblage of the fineſt features diſtorted by fear.

To the queſtion, inſinuatingly offered by her purſuer, ſhe anſwered with a trembling voice—Lambert was yet alive, but abſent—

Adela

Adela was no more—Herſelf had purchaſed the cottage for the old man—who managed the buſineſs for their joint ſupport—and perceiving Raymond about to renew his inquiries, reſolutely paſſed him, and haſtily returned to the houſe; but he unable, from motives of delicacy, to follow her, gave up any farther hope of information, and, mounting his horſe reluctantly with Sir Jocelin, entered the wood on their way back to Morpeth, while a melancholy he could not account for, was a juſt excuſe for the gloomy taciturnity that rendered the reſt of their excurſion tedious and unpleaſant.

CHAP.

CHAP. VI.

Fate ſhew thy force—ourſelves we do not know;
What is decreed muſt be—and this is ſo.

SHAKESPEARE.

THE ſingular encounter, ſo recent with the female in the woods, contributed not to tranquillize Raymond's ſpirits, and he felt ſome concern in the reflection that he had not waited Lambert's return, as ſomething might have derived from his intelligence that would have led to an explanation at leaſt of *who* ſhe was. Her perſon was majeſtic—

her

her dreſs that of neglected elegance—her grief ſeemed to be of a nature that nothing but death could annihilate—and the abruptneſs of her flight accorded not with the notion he had formed of her dignified manner, but rather appeared the conſequence of a wiſh not to be known.

Upon this concluſion, he congratulated his own moderation in not preſſing his purſuit. To go back, as he had almoſt reſolved to do, would be to act derogatory to his high notions of female delicacy, ſince no ſatisfaction could be obtained but at that expence; beſides, it might deprive him of ſome hours of felicity, ſhould Edred return while he was abſent, and what were Lambert's connexions or concerns when eſtimated with the important invitation he ſo ardently hoped; he therefore reſolved to wait the ſummons that would give him confidence to meet the noble friends of his Ella.

Thus

Thus expecting, meditating and perplexed, he paſſed that night and the whole of the next day, when unable to conceal his emotions, Raymond ordered his horſe, and penſively took the road leading to Mortimer-Houſe.—The ſun was nearly ſetting in all the glowing beauties of a clear horizon, and diffuſed a warm rich colouring over the plains that lay at the foot of the hill which lifted Sir Jocelin's dwelling above their's.—The reſtleſs young man had deſcended the eminence, and was now gently riding through a deep narrow lane, when at the end of it he perceived his courier juſt entering with a ſlow heavy pace, which ill accorded with his maſter's fiery expectations, who, ſpurring his ſteed, ſoon ſhortened the diſtance between them, feeling almoſt impelled to chide the faithful fellow for evincing leſs eagerneſs than himſelf.

"You have letters, Edred, doubtleſs—quick—where are they?"

Edred

Edred drew forth a packet: — "Theſe, my Lord ——."

"Enough—enough.—You have ſeen Lord Berkley, and he has written."

"I have *not* ſeen Lord Berkley.—Thoſe letters are what your Lordſhip ordered me to deliver."

Raymond, in an impatient agony, now lifted his eye to Edred's face, on which vexation, and even fear, was legibly written.

"You diſtract me, Edred; what mean you by thoſe evaſions?"

"Indeed," ſaid the trembling fellow, "I would not diſtreſs my Lord; but you muſt know the truth, and the truth, oh! unutterable anguiſh ——."

"Yes,

"Yes, I *would* know the truth; what then would you tell me? Alight, and lead the horſes; I can hear with leſs inconvenience."

He then quitted his own beaſt, giving the bridle to Edred, who alighting alſo, began with informing Raymond, that, upon his arrival, he was introduced to Mortimer, to whom he delivered the credentials intended for himſelf and the Queen, and was immediately diſmiſſed, after a very ſtern inquiry, if that were the whole of his buſineſs at Mortimer-Houſe, which he took the liberty to affirm.

That croſſing a court, which intervened between the ſervants offices and the main building, he met a ſoldier, who he recollected to have followed Lord Berkley when he left the Caſtle, and by this man learned the following particulars:

"That the Earl, for what cauſe he knew not, was ſent priſoner that very morning under

under a ſtrong guard to London, and the Counteſs of Lancaſter, who was alſo fallen into deep diſgrace, had been commanded not to leave her apartment without the Royal Permiſſion."

Here Edred ſtopped to recover his horſe, who had ſlipped into a deep rut, while his maſter waited with the air of one who dreaded ſomething yet more calamitous; but finding his ſervant ceaſed to ſpeak, he demanded if that were all he had heard?

"All of any conſequence. He told me indeed of a young woman, who, it was ſuppoſed, the Regent was fond of, ſaying, that ſhe had left the houſe without telling why or wherefore, and it was thought *that* was the reaſon that the Counteſs was confined."

Such was the effect of the cruel information that De Vallenciennes aſcended the hill, at the foot of which they were now arrived,

arrived, without expreſſing any farther curioſity, or even noticing Sir Jocelin, who came out to meet him, anxious to know the ſucceſs of Edred's embaſſy.

The Knight too truly gueſſed it was of a nature too diſagreeable to admit of communication, and he followed his unhappy friend without attempting to break the ſullen ſilence he ſeemed diſpoſed to preſerve: Edred, however, drew Sir Jocelin aſide, and told him of a circumſtance he was fearful of mentioning to his Lord, namely, that maſter Ranulph had been cloſeted with Mortimer, who treated him with a confidential familiarity, and the thoughtful fellow expreſſed his fear, that this viſit portended no good to his beloved Lord.

To this Sir Jocelin made no anſwer; but to commend Edred's preſence of mind, tho' he encouraged a preſentiment of ſomething bad from that quarter; but at preſent the ſole

ſole employment of this benevolent man conſiſted in ſoothing his miſerable inmate, who loſt in the ſtupor of grief many of thoſe invaluable hours, which youth, health and hope, ſo generally tint with their brighteſt, gayeſt colours, continually, if abroad, ſeeking the deepeſt and moſt melancholy receſſes, or ſhutting the door of his darkened chamber, with an obſtinate perſeverance upon his ſympathizing and hoſpitable entertainer.

While misfortune thus aimed her keeneſt ſhafts from every poſſible direction to the heart and feelings of the deſolate Raymond, his lamented Ella had no evident reaſon to boaſt a larger ſhare of happineſs.

The night ſucceeding her arrival at Mortimer-Houſe, was embittered by many corroding reflections, the moſt prominent of which lingered upon the portrait that had ſhot, as it were, a bolt of ice through her trembling boſom.—It was connected with ideas

ideas of every terrible meaning, and ſeemed to confirm ſuſpicions hitherto fluctuating between hope and doubt. From theſe her imagination deſcended to a ſubject, perhaps leſs juſtifiable, though rendered by the innocence of her intention perfectly harmleſs, and this upon the different features of two characters the moſt oppoſite in her unexperienced eſtimate of human excellence. The calculation ended in Raymond's ſuperiority, whoſe gentle and reſpectful admiration was ſo diſguſtfully contraſted by the bold and decided expreſſion of Mortimer's impetuous paſſion; nor was the compariſon of perſon wanting to aid her preference of him whom ſhe certainly *did* prefer, even to a degree of uneaſineſs, though this was a ſecret ſhe hardly dared to aſcertain, her knowledge of him being ſo ſlight as to render (in the opinion of true delicacy) even this indulgence reprehenſible; yet ſhe ventured to bring forward the youth, ſpirit and freſhneſs, of Raymond againſt Mortimer's ſallow countenance,

fierce

fierce revengeful eye, and years advanced beyond the meridian of life; nor had ſhe diſmiſſed the perplexing ſentiment, when the entrance of Urſula, announcing the hour of riſing, broke every cobweb idea, wove by the hand of deluſive hope, and awakened her to a ſenſe of danger, poverty, and, it might be, horrors worſe than either.

Scarcely had Urſula departed with the uſual breakfaſt refreſhments, when Ella finding every thing ſilent below, ſtepped into the gallery, hardly able to decide upon her inducement for it, though a wiſh for liberty was doubtleſs the oſtenſible cauſe.

To the right of her opened the chamber, containing the picture which ſhe would once more have conſidered, from a faint hope it might not be the repreſentative of the woman ſhe had fondly revered; but at the moment ſhe was applying her hand to the lock, her eye was attracted by the appearance of a Lady

Lady from the top of the ſtair-caſe, whom ſhe immediately recognized to be Lady Lancaſter.

Ella would have retreated; but the Counteſs, in a low voice, told her, ſhe wiſhed to ſpeak with her, and Ella reſpectfully waited till her honoured viſitor had entered the chamber, when, carefully cloſing the door, ſhe apologized to the trembling maid for the queſtions ſhe wiſhed to have anſwered.

To account for this Lady's abrupt curioſity, it is neceſſary to recollect Iſabella's proud confuſion, when on the preceding day ſhe had ſeen Ella in the hall, whoſe ſimple, yet elegant, manners, ſo well became the lovely perſon they adorned.

She had obſerved Mortimer's vexation, and the fond glance which he could not conceal during the momentary encounter.—She turned

turned to the magnificent glaſs which adorned her anti-room, and there beheld only the faded remains of that beauty which the unhappy Edward had once adored, and in her mind's eye contraſted it with the ſweet and mild aſpect of the *houſe-keeper's niece.*

Mortimer's propenſity to rural charms ſhe had more than once forgiven; but *this* was an attachment not likely to be annihilated by the fear of offending Royalty itſelf, and ſuch was the unity of dignity with ſimplicity, that the Queen could not allow ſo large a portion of the former, as Ella poſſeſſed, to low and ſordid birth. There was a myſtery, but of what nature her intriguing ſpirit could not yet determine: However, ſomething muſt be done, and the firſt moment of Lady Lancaſter's attendance, when her miſtreſs retired for the night, this artful woman failed not to try the ſentiments of the Counteſs, reſpecting a girl, whoſe obſcurity could not juſtify to her exceſſive pride the inquiry, frantic

jealouſy induced: But to that Lady Iſabella was too well known.

She had long and painfully ſtudied a character whoſe features were odious; as firſt Lady of the wardrobe, ſhe had often witneſſed her caprice, luxury and pride, and ſaw beneath them even deeper ſhades of vice.

She had heard, without a poſſibility of prevention, the various ſchemes laid for the miſerable Monarch's ruin, by his abandoned wife, and had herſelf wept the death of a noble huſband, lately ſacrificed to the deteſted policy of deſtructive faction.

She nouriſhed beſides another grief, within the receſſes of a loaded heart, perhaps attributable to this violent miſtreſs; therefore was no ſtranger to the clues and doublings of her corrupted, though ſecret, machinations.

To

To the Queen's expreſſions of admiration, then, ſhe oppoſed only the coldeſt aſſent, and, in anſwer to her Highneſs's ſlightly expreſſed inclination to know if Ella was deſerving of Royal notice, and of what nature her real connexions were in that family, Lady Lancaſter ventured to propoſe a viſit to the young creature, nothing doubting but ſhe ſhould gain a poſitive knowledge of theſe particulars.

With a well imitated indifference Iſabella conceded to a requeſt which, had it not been made, herſelf would have iſſued in the likeneſs of a command, and was inwardly pleaſed to be ſpared a ſuſpicion that would reflect upon her *prudence*, the only quality which her beſt friends could allow her.

The Counteſs felt extreme ſatisfaction in thus gaining a point ſo intereſting to her benevolent ſpirit, and prepoſſeſſed with a favourable idea of Ella's perfections, ſhe triumphed

in the hope of ſaving her from the equally criminal intrigues of ſtate and licentiouſneſs; but to do this, it was abſolutely neceſſary to conceal her deſigns from Mortimer, as well as to cover them by an apparent obedience to the Queen's wiſhes.

Her protracted hour of attendance had conſumed ſo much of the night, and the fatigue reſulting from it, induced Lady Lancaſter to defer, till the following day, the accompliſhment of her intention, and ſhe choſe the time uſually obſerved by the Regent for his viſit to her Royal Miſtreſs, as it would ſecure her from preſent diſcovery.

Ella, who was totally ignorant of her Ladyſhip's reaſon for the requeſt which ſhe had indeed preferred with a degree of abruptneſs, ſtood a moment in ſilent confuſion; but quickly felt herſelf reaſſured by that amiable frankneſs, which ſo generally diſtinguiſhes Noble birth and elegant manners, while

while endeavouring to aſſimulate them to the more humbly ſituated, without detracting from real dignity.

To the queſtion, therefore, reſpecting her abode in that houſe, ſhe anſwered with candid ſimplicity, and painted the diſtreſs which Mortimer had only varied without relieving, in colours ſo gloomy, and language ſo pathetic, that her venerable auditor could not repreſs her tears, while in the gentleſt accent ſhe expreſſed her inclination to ſerve the poor girl in the way ſhe might think moſt acceptable.

This was too much for Ella; it rouſed every ſpark of gratitude in her tender, generous, heart.

She ſighed—ſhe wept.

She could not ſpeak; while the Counteſs

ſilently waited, with increaſing admiration, thoſe forcible effuſions of a liberal ſoul.

After Ella had recovered compoſure ſufficient to proceed, ſhe went on to explain more fully the manner of her quitting Lambert's protection—the uneaſineſs which ſhe was ſure her abſence had occaſioned—and her ineffectual attempt to return to the dear object of her dutiful affection.

"Duty!" repeated Lady Lancaſter, ſoftly—"Duty to Lambert—was then ſo low, ſo plain a perſon, father to ſuch an elegant creature—it might accord with the manners of her habit; but her ſentiments—her countenance—her delicacy—the picture too—from whence aroſe the anguiſh it excited?"

The entrance of Urſula not only broke into the ſcheme Ella's viſitor had formed to come at the real knowledge of her family, but gave by her preſence general uneaſineſs, though

though ſhe immediately retired upon ſeeing her young priſoner ſo honourably engaged.

The Counteſs followed directly, after agreeing to meet Ella on the following day.

CHAP. VII.

The modeſt virtues mingled in her eyes
Still on the ground dejected; ——
Or when the mournful tale ——
Of what her faithleſs fortune promis'd once,
Thrill'd in her thought, they, like the dewy ſtar
Of evening, ſhone in tears. ——

THOMPSON.

THE hour was now elapſed in which Lady Lancaſter had promiſed to meet Ella; but as Iſabella's capricious movements were not wholly unknown, even to her, ſhe endeavoured to attribute her diſappointment to that ſource, and would have ventured

ventured out of the chamber, but was fearful of miſſing the Counteſs, who was equally impatient for another interview, and had really aſcended the ſtairs for that motive; but the ſight of Mortimer terrified her from her purpoſe, therefore ſhe turned aſide to a room, which he would be obliged to paſs in his way to the hall, and it was a conſiderable time before he quitted his chamber, at the door of which he was ſtanding when ſhe firſt ſaw him...

It now was evident that he waited for her departure; but finding ſhe ſtill continued in that apartment, he reluctantly deſcended, and the moment after Ella received her expected viſitor, but with a beaten heart.

The converſation was immediately commenced by her Ladyſhip, who had not diſmiſſed from her mind the diſagreeable ſuggeſtion that Ella was Lambert's offſpring, and ſhe gently intimated her wiſhes to know

if ſhe was the daughter of the worthy couple, for whoſe happineſs ſhe appeared ſo much intereſted.

The ſurpriſed girl candidly denied any affinity to them.

"To whom, then, my dear, do you owe an exiſtence, which hitherto ſeems diſtinguiſhed by variety of ſuffering?" — Ella pauſed.

This was, indeed, an important queſtion; but, however reluctant ſhe might be to enter upon an elucidation which ſhe could not think of without horror, it was now become neceſſary to her intereſt, and poſſibly to her ſafety alſo: In conſequence of this reſolution ſhe began, though with a trembling heſitation, to ſpeak of thoſe calamities which had driven her to ſeek the protection of ſtrangers, and which the promiſe ſhe had formerly made, rendered ſtill more awfully important.

"The illuſtrious ſtation," ſaid the timid girl, "which Lady Lancaſter has ſo long adorned at Court, muſt have made the name and misfortunes of Earl William Fitzroy well known to her. The ſorrows of that unhappy Nobleman have deſcended with his name to the deſolate being you have ſo generouſly encouraged. It is unneceſſary to delineate the mode of life common to an heireſs of ſuch a houſe. Indeed I have been ſo long eſtranged to it, that it appears more the gay viſion of an extravagant fancy than a pompous reality; but early as I became the victim of cruelty, yet were the rudiments of a polite and liberal education aſſiduouſly impreſſed upon my mind, and though I was indulged in the harmleſs whims of ſportive gaiety, my beloved parent was ever watchful to check any propenſity unworthy the delicacy of ſex, or the name I bore."

"My mother, Madam—I think I was not much indebted to my mother for that

anxious tenderneſs, which ſo generally marks the maternal character. She would look upon me ſome how as if ——; but I was a child.—Perhaps the tear I have ſeen her ſhed.—The ſigh, which my infantine endearments called forth, might not ariſe from diſlike—yet ſhe would ſhun me—and once, as I attempted to claſp her neck, ſhe ſhook me from her, ſaying, "What ought to have been a bleſſing to her was a bitter curſe!"

"Can you, my love," aſked the Counteſs, "can you appropriate this ſingular behaviour to any oſtenſible cauſe?"

"None upon earth, Madam, unleſs ——."

Ella pauſed, and appeared ſtruck with ſome terrible recollection. The portrait ſhe had ſeen in Mortimer's bed-chamber ſhe was certain was her mother's, and that Magdalen form. ——

The

The tears which hung upon her cheeks, and which guilt ſeemed to deprive of every claim to pity, now ſeemed to ſtrengthen a ſuſpicion which, notwithſtanding the dark hints ſhe had formerly received. ſhe had never, till this recapitulation, dared to encourage.

It was a pauſe interrupted by her various emotions; Lady Lancaſter ſhuddered at the ſtrong expreſſion of diſtreſs ſo viſible on her countenance.

" I am truly concerned (ſaid that Lady) for the tax I am obliged to levy on your ſenſibility; but remember, my dear girl, you are unboſoming yourſelf to a real friend. — Remember too, that upon your ſincerity depends fortune, protection, and liberty.

Ella ſobbed; but deriving fortitude from the ſweet hope held out to her, after ſhe had recovered

recovered the power of articulation, thus proceeded in her little narrative.

"Perhaps, my Lady, you will blame a deſerted child for hinting a doubt of her mother's affection? But ——."

"I do not, my dear. Her conduct in that reſpect was inexcuſeable, and ——." Here the Counteſs checked herſelf, for, tho' a ſtranger to Lady Fitzroy's perſon, ſhe was not ſo to her character, which was deeply ſhaded with more than a ſuppoſition of inconſtancy, and had been ſeverely arraigned; but upon this topic it was impoſſible to inſiſt, and with a motion of her head ſhe ſignified her attention.

"Thus diſtinguiſhed (continued Ella) I, though a mere child, could not help contraſting her indifference with the lively marks of love, which I received from my revered father, and his little leſs beloved brother Lord

Lord Henry, who encouraging my cheerful ſallies would often bring my mother's diſpleaſure upon him, particularly when noticing the youthful graces which his partiality would attribute to my perſon."

"Dear and reſpectable Lord Henry, how much was I indebted to your kindneſs? — Ah! Madam, you will not wonder at the enthuſiaſm of gratitude, when you are told he preſerved my inſignificant life at the hazard of his own.

The Counteſs redoubled her anxious attention, and Ella went on:

"On that eventful evening, the remembrance of which can never be obliterated from my mind, while I was employed in ſoothing the melancholy that now appeared, the predominant habit of Lady Fitzroy, ſhe beſtowed a greater ſhare of tenderneſs than I had for ſome time experienced; it was in a receſs

receſs particularly ſuitable to her ideas; the upper part was a temple conſtructed in a new and elegant ſtile, and ſupported by colonnades, round which were twiſted variety of beautiful ſhrubs, and the interſtices were ornamented by gilded lattices in imitation, as I have heard the Earl remark, of the Turkiſh manner, the whole ſurrounded by thick tall trees, planted cloſe enough to exclude the beams of the ſun.

"We had not ſat long when my uncle entered, with ſuch a look of horror as almoſt froze my young heart, and while he gazed in ſilence upon my mother, I fancied diſdain was ſtill more viſible than any other ſenſation: However, I ran towards him, but he abſolutely repelled my attempt to take his hand. I burſt into tears, and followed the Counteſs, who quitted the temple, and putting her arm round me preſſed me to her boſom, while ſhe reclined her face upon my ſhoulder. I was delighted with this unuſual teſtimony

teſtimony of her affection, and we entered the great parlour together, while my uncle came ſlowly after us; but I was ſtill more pained with the evident contempt which flaſhed from my father's eye, as he forced a laconic obſervation upon his Lady's deſire of ſolitude.

" Young as I was, this behaviour obtained my particular notice, nor did I fail to remark his ſtudied indifference to her as we ſat at ſupper.

" While I was pondering upon a behaviour ſo unuſual, my uncle ſuddenly aroſe with an aſpect of terror, and, looking ſternly at the Counteſs, ſaid ſomething to her, the import of which ſeemed to be a reproach, as I then imagined, by the words—ruin—diſhonour—wretchedneſs and diſgrace.

" She ſtarted up, and was leaving the room, when a tall figure (whoſe features, as much

much I can recollect, reſembled the Regent's) met her at the door, and taking her hand, would have led her back to her ſeat; but the Earl interfered, and ſnatching her hand from his, put himſelf into a poſture, ſuch as I have ſeen at a tournament. The ſtranger ſtamped, and ſeveral ſoldiers came in ——.

" O, Madam! in that dreadful moment I loſt my beloved father, and Lord Henry interpoſing, I thought they were both murdered. A crowd of armed men now joined the aſſaſſins, and our own people were ſoon (as I ſuppoſe, and indeed as I was afterwards informed) overpowered. — My agonizing ſcreams became inceſſant: I knew not what I did—ſcarcely what was paſſing—till the dear uncle, who I imagined was killed, caught me from the graſp of the chief agent in this dreadful buſineſs, and conveyed me through the hall to the front court, where his horſe was yet hanging by his bridle to a ſtaple in the wall, left there, as I think, by the ſervant,

vant, whom this fatal confuſion in the houſe had ſummoned to defend their Lord.

" Without waiting one moment for their aſſiſtance, Lord Henry mounted his ſteed, and, placing me before him, gallopped furiouſly along a private road, which branched off to the right of our houſe, and continued for ſome time his rapid courſe, when being checked by the ſteepneſs of a ſtupendous hill, my uncle took that opportunity to break a ſilence which fear, and the velocity of the horſe, had obliged us to keep.

" Perceiving I was fatigued beyond the power of ſitting, he gently took me off, ſaying, 'he hoped a little reſt would enable me to bear the exceſſive motion till he could procure me a place of ſafety.'

" I ſighed and wept, but my fate was fixed, and, young as I was, even life itſelf ſeemed of little eſtimation. O how diſmal

was

was the riſing dawn to me, when I conſidered it broke perhaps but to light us on to farther evils! However, it appeared to do a better office for my uncle, and he aroſe with a degree of cheerfulneſs to catch his horſe, who was careleſsly cropping the luxuriant graſs, and we once more committed ourſelves to the protection of that Being, who has hitherto ſignalized his mercies in my preſervation.

"While we were travelling, Lord Henry conjured me to keep the tranſactions of the foregoing night an impenetrable ſecret, as it was too probable both my fortune and exiſtence were connected with them.

"Alas! Madam, this is one of the myſteries of a fate diſtinguiſhed by calamity:—However, I was then too low—too indifferent—to cheriſh a future hope.

"Murder!——

"The

" The murder of my noble father—perhaps that of my mother—caſt the blackeſt gloom upon every idea, and every queſtion I ventured to aſk related ſolely to them;—but heavy ſighs, and a trickling tear, were my only anſwers; yet there was conviction in them, and I ſunk into a deſpondency, which the various ſcenes around us could not remove.

" Sometimes enveloped in tall woods, while our poor houſe was every moment ſinking in the ſwamps beneath them; ſometimes emerging to the wild and pathleſs moors, where we wandered in a tedious uncertainty. Our journey at length became painful in the extreme, rendered the more ſo by faſting, and I was interceding with my uncle to ſtop, were it only for a few minutes, when he bid me obſerve a cottage which ſtood at ſome diſtance, ſaying, 'he would leave me there, if he liked the appearance of its inhabitants.'

" Leave

" Leave me! what among ſtrangers?" The faint accent, and feeble manner in which I ſpoke, ſhocked my dear preſerver, and he ſoothed me with the ſofteſt tenderneſs.

" I need not ſay that, ſtruck with the benevolent looks of Lambert and his wife, he delivered me up to their care, and from that hour I have neither ſeen or heard, except indeed ——.

" Ella heſitated.—She remembered Deſpencer.—She remembered Raymond; but it was not to Lady Lancaſter ſhe could venture her ſuſpicions reſpecting the Fitzroy they had ſpoken of. She now pauſed.

" Overcome by the ſenſations ſo long ſuppreſſed, her agitation only became ſtronger, and her compaſſionate auditor, who pitied as much as ſhe admired, the candid narrator had juſt renewed her offers of friendſhip and protection, when the ruſtling of a female dreſs

dreſs near the door banished every idea but that of a diſcovery, and Ella was juſt riſing to learn the cauſe, when, to her unutterable confuſion, entered Iſabella, who, covering her uneaſy ſuſpicions with the ſhew of affability, bid the frightened girl compoſe herſelf, ſaying, "She now expected from Lady Lancaſter the confirmation of her hope, that Ella's birth and principles would not render nugatory the reſolution of Majeſty to diſtinguiſh ſuch a pleaſing object with Royal favour."

Bending with the deepeſt reſpect to her auguſt viſitor, Ella ſilently waited the diſcloſure of intentions, which ſhe almoſt dreaded to hear; while the anxious Counteſs, fearful that the awe, ſo natural to young people unuſed to the preſence of a Queen, might deſtroy the caution natural to her character, thought proper to recommend her, in cold and ſlight terms, as a proper ſubject for her Highneſs's benevolence; that ſhe was more

more calculated for retirement than the gay ſcenes of a polite Court; that ſhe was ſure it was the prior wiſh of Ella's heart to quit the houſe of Regent Mortimer, and if her noble miſtreſs ſaw nothing improper in the diſpoſal, ſhe would ſend Ella for the preſent to Lancaſter-Houſe.

The Queen pauſed upon a ſcheme which might throw the girl yet more completely into her minion's power, and was inimical to the project ſhe had ſecretly formed of giving him, at no very future period, a legal title to the hand as well as heart, which ſhe had ſo wickedly withdrawn from her abuſed huſband.

"You are exceedingly kind, Lady Lancaſter, to this young woman; but I ſhould ſuppoſe, under *my* eye, a perſon ſo *obſcure*, might be equally ſafe."

As this was ſpoken with a ſarcaſtic ſmile, that verged even towards contempt, the

poor Lady ſilently acquieſced, though ſhe ſaw in this unlucky interference every hope of being ſerviceable to the innocent maid totally ſuppreſſed.

" You are willing then," ſaid Iſabella, " to become one of my ſuite, for which office this Lady will oblige me by giving you every needful inſtruction."

Ella's reaſons for refuſing this offer were not leſs powerful than obvious, and ſo ſtrong was her objection, that, independent of her reluctance to offend, and the melancholy alternative that awaited her denial, ſhe faintly expreſſed her wiſh to be permitted to depart from that houſe, as her reaſons for leaving it were unalterable.

" And is this the *innocent?*" ſaid Iſabella, in a tone of the higheſt diſdain, her countenance pale, and lips trembling with rage: — " Is this the inſignificant creature, whom *you*,

Lady Lancaſter, have taught to affront her Queen?"

"Know, minion," turning to Ella, who dropped upon her knees in the utmoſt terror: — "Know that I am acquainted with your motives for quitting a place where your conduct, reſpecting this pretendedly deſpiſed Mortimer might be too ſtrictly ſcrutinized."

The pride of inſulted virtue ſparkled in Ella's eye. She roſe with a dignity more becoming her perſecutor, and, wringing her claſped hands, while the tears flowed over her burning cheek, every fear ſubdued, every caution forgotten:

"And *who*," cried ſhe, "is Mortimer? Is he not the ſcourge of the nation, the gaoler of his King? I diſdain him. It ſhall be the buſineſs of my life to ſhun him; nor ſhall the innocence of my character ever be ſullied with

with a ſuſpicion ſo derogatory to female delicacy."

"Ella," ſaid the Counteſs, "no more of this for Heaven's ſake; you are ſigning your own deſtruction."

"Take her away," commanded Iſabella, "and teach her the duty of a ſubject. Her violence I forgive. It is a proof of integrity, and it is my will that ſhe be prepared for my ſervice. For the preſent attend me to my cloſet, and then ſlightly noticing the wretched girl, who reſiſted her kind friends endeavours to raiſe her, till ſhe had invoked the Queen's pity, and bleſſed her for her forgiveneſs."

This miſerable, though royal victim of pride and paſſion, retired, pierced to the ſoul by a reproach ſo bitter, yet ſo unintended; nor could the thickeſt folds of a corrupted heart ward off the random ſhaft. Lady

Lancaſter ſaw it lighten in her eye, while it drove the blood from her ſallow cheek.

That a creature, apparently ſo mean, ſhould dare not only to reflect upon a Nobleman ſo favoured; but that ſhe ſhould tacitly confeſs herſelf above him, was ſuch a reflection upon her own bad conduct, as to awaken every feeling which guilt and ſhame could render horrible.

As ſoon as the neceſſary preparations for Ella's appearance, as attendant on the Queen, could be finiſhed, ſhe was introduced by Lady Lancaſter to her imperious miſtreſs, who ſcornfully noticing her dejected aſpect, commanded her to withdraw till ſhe ſhould become more ſenſible of the honour ſhe had received.

"Alas!" thought Ella, "in Lambert's cottage this caution would be unneceſſary:— It was the idea of a moment as ſhe paſſed from

from the anti-chamber to her own little room.

The appearance of Mortimer was ill fitted to give her countenance an air of tranquillity. He gazed at her with aſtoniſhment. The ſimply clad Ella he had not forgotten; but in the elegant Court dreſs her beauty was improved into Majeſty. The haſte with which ſhe ſhunned him prevented the gratification of his curioſity; but when Ella again entered the preſence, his uſual caution before Iſabella, had well nigh forſaken him.

She was now an object more worthy his purſuit. Her form—features—manners—ſo impreſſive—ſo ſuperior—all ſtrengthened the wiſhes, hopes and expectations, which, from the evening of their meeting he had ſo fully indulged, and the glances he ventured to repeat were ſoon obſerved by the Queen, in whoſe boſom glowed the bittereſt paſſions—rage—envy—jealouſy and pride.

It was then Lady Lancaſter trembled for the fate of her protagée. Her timidity ſhe had found was more the effect of temper than diſpoſition. Her principles were noble as her birth, and well ſhe knew, from late experience, that any violence done to the latter would prevent the operation of the former: Should Mortimer, therefore, or Iſabella, preſume, upon the ſuppoſed humility of her extraction, the Counteſs dreaded that effervescence of ſpirit which might likewiſe deſtroy her caution, and it was highly eſſential that her birth ſhould be concealed.

CHAP.

CHAP. VIII.

Not happineſs itſelf makes good her name;
Our very wiſhes give us not our wiſh.

YOUNG.

THE arrival of Lord Berkeley about this period brought ſome relief to Lady Lancaſter at leaſt, who, happy to renew her ancient friendſhip with this venerable Nobleman, ſought every opportunity to complete that purpoſe, and well remembering the familiar intimacy ſubſiſting between his Lordſhip and Ella's father, ſhe conceived a hope

of moving his generous heart in her favour, as his power and character gave conſequence to thoſe who were fortunate enough to obtain his attention.

To her affecting repreſentation of the poor girl's ſufferings, he liſtened with a degree of aſtoniſhment and pity, and when the Counteſs preſented the deſerted heireſs of his late eſtimable friend, her attracting graces, and ſweet deportment, with a combination of features expreſſing the ſtrongeſt claim to admiration, ſo enchanted him, that every other recommendation ſeemed unneceſſary. Her tears and ſobs, when he feelingly lamented the loſs he had ſuſtained in Earl Fitzroy, while they evinced her own ſenſibility increaſed his, and he immediately fell in with Lady Lancaſter's wiſhes to adopt her as the child of his affection, promiſing to uſe his beſt endeavours to preſerve her from the dangers of licentiouſneſs, as well as thoſe (perhaps as ruinous) to which her enraged rival might probably condemn her.

Lord

Lord Berkley now recollected the unhappy ſituation of his young friend Raymond, who, in the moment of mutual communication, had committed to him the emotions of his heart in Ella's favour, and he conceived it no impeachment of his honour to ſpeak of De Vallenciennes, were it only to try the effect of his name.

Ella ſtarted at the mention of one who ſhe had ſecretly determined ſhould never more occupy a place in her memory; but Ella was not the only auditor this name diſcompoſed, for before Lord Berkley could proceed, the Counteſs, with viſible agitation, repeated it.

"And to what Raymond De Vallenciennes do you refer?" She exclaimed,

"Him whom the unfortunate Deſpencer adopted—with whom he made a temporary eſcape from his bitter enemies?"

" I do moſt undoubtedly mean that very Raymond; he whom I left an unhappy priſoner at Berkley Caſtle."

" Then he is yet living," cried the trembling Lady: " Wonderful—moſt Wonderful are thy operations—thou Great Omnipotence!"

" You know not Lord Berkley — you know not Ella — the foundation of thoſe emotions which ſwell this almoſt burſting heart. Be certain, he is worthy of every diſtinction. Continue to him your love and friendſhip; he will reward, if I know aught of his principles, he will reward the ſtrongeſt attachment by the nobleneſs of ——:

" But we are ſummoned: I hear the Queen going to her toilet."

" Do, my love," ſhe continued, " make my excuſes to her Highneſs, at leaſt till I can conquer this unſeaſonable trepidation."

Ella

Ella departed with reluctance, haſtily wiping away thoſe tears herſelf dared not to indulge. Tears—*ſo* ſweet—impregnated with *ſuch* hopes—ſhe had never before ſhed—and *now*—when through the watery priſon ſhe was free to view her fate in brighter tints than her gloomy proſpects had hitherto permitted, it was ſurely hard to be denied a conſolation ſo delicious, eſpecially when the interruption was occaſioned by nothing leſs than a prompt obedience to the arbitrary whims of her capricious miſtreſs, whoſe ſituation became every day more miſerable to herſelf, and in conſequence more intolerable to her attendance.

To render that ſituation yet more poignant, though under the idea that its concomitant circumſtances would be happily annihilated, this wretched woman privately conſented to her impriſoned conſort's death. The effects of this diabolical act has already been ſhewn, and while every feeling heart

floated in tears of grief for Edward's horrid exit, his widow was planning a method by which ſhe might be the *legal* proprietor of that heart, whoſe blackneſs none but her own could boaſt a deeper die.

But ſhe had now reached the zenith of ſucceſsful guilt, it could aim no higher, and while ſhe ſecretly nouriſhed the prepoſterous intention of giving her hand to a man, who was now as openly deteſted by the nation as *ſhe* was privately by him, he was artfully endeavouring to elude the unwiſhed honour, holding himſelf at ſuch a reſpectful diſtance, that, while ſhe ſecretly execrated what her vanity miſnamed caution, ſhe could only vent her ſpleen upon thoſe, whoſe ſilent duties were rewarded with peeviſh diſſatisfaction, or intemperate fury.

It was at this period Iſabella received a ſhock, which all her arts could not evade.—The ſon, whoſe power ſhe had eventually, though

though unintendedly, eſtabliſhed by his father's death, enraged and deeply grieved at an act ſo atrocious, and ſuſpicious of its derivation, arrived, without any previous notice, at Mortimer-Houſe, where he ſcrupled not, with an honeſt aſperity, to cenſure her attachment to a man, who was held out to the public as the deſtroyer of his King.

It was true that Mortimer, whoſe cunning equalled his viler qualities, had artfully declined officiating in national affairs; but he was conſidered, in many inſtances, as Regent, a title which he joyfully appropriated, while in words he denied it; but the Royal youth, ſince his own marriage with the noble Phillippa, ſeemed not to pay him even the ſhadow of obedience, and with an ill-conceaſed indignation his mother beheld her minion's power in the firſt inſtance of degradation; but this ſhe dared not hint to Mortimer, leſt his preſumption ſhould lead him to the open defiance of monarchical Authority, which might

might ſoon deprive him of liberty and life, and the better to colour her pretended reſignation of his friendſhip, ſhe agreed to accompany her excellent ſon to London.

Ever rapid in her decifions, and not ſeldom as unreaſonable, Iſabella named the ſucceeding morning for her departure, privately ſettling with her favourite the mode of a future correſpondence, and inwardly pleaſed to think, that, by taking Ella in her ſuite, ſhe might probably put a total negative upon any latent wiſh he might form reſpecting her lovely attendant.

Mortimer tried to appear affected with the Queen's cruel reſolution; but when ſhe added her intention to carry away his beloved maid, his grief was no longer counterfeit, and he ſilently ſwore to obtain (if poſſible) the accompliſhment of his licentious hopes.

When

When the unhappy Lady Lancaſter was made acquainted with this arrangement, it added another pang to thoſe, which her Royal Maſter's ſufferings had given to her ſenſible heart; weak and dejected—plunged into a ſtate of languor and inattention to outward objects, ſhe yet could feel the keenneſs of diſappointment, when informed ſhe could no longer be ſerviceable to Ella's intereſt, and lamented to Lord Berkley the dangerous ſituation of that lovely girl.

"To what purpoſe," ſhe cried, "have I planned the ſcheme of a viſionary brain? —What ſhall I ſay to Raymond De Vallenciennes, when he comes in all the agony of half-formed expectation to claim, perhaps, the ſweet orphan I muſt give up? O what—even in the midſt of ſorrow—what hopes of retribution floated upon the explanation of certain myſteries! Revenge too, Lord Berkley; nay, had I not reſolved ——." The Counteſs ſtopped upon Ella's entrance, who juſt

juſt then had quitted the Queen, after hearing a determination that almoſt diſtracted her.

To have left Mortimer-Houſe was amongſt the chiefeſt wiſhes of her ſoul; but to leave the helpleſs, diſordered Lady Lancaſter behind—ſhe, who often had ſtood between her and Iſabella's diſpleaſure, who had partly encouraged her to look forward to Raymond's arrival as an event to which was connected her happy eſtabliſhment, and whoſe infirmities now called for the moſt watchful tenderneſs.

"I cannot," ſaid the unhappy girl, "I cannot leave my dear, my reſpectable benefactreſs. Plead for me, Madam. Her Highneſs can have no inducement to prefer my attendance, ſince ſhe is continually reproaching me for want of ſpirits. Let me ſtay with you.—Let me ſit by your couch, and ſooth your ſorrows."

"It

"It cannot be, my love," ſaid the compaſſionate Berkley: "The Queen's commands muſt not be diſputed."

"Alas!" ſaid Ella, ſighing, "too well I know ſhe is truly deſpotic; but ſurely her will, in this inſtance, at leaſt ——."

"*Shall not* be diſpenſed with," thundered a voice, raiſed to its higheſt pitch of anger.

Ella caught Lady Lancaſter's hand, as ſhe raiſed herſelf from the couch to receive Iſabella, who, in paſſing that Lady's apartment, heard Lord Berkley's obſervation, with the offending Ella's anſwer.

The Counteſs would have deprecated Iſabella's wrath in behalf of her ſpeechleſs favourite; but ſhe was ſilenced, with a ſevere reflection upon her own conduct, and an order not to interfere between her Queen and thoſe who dared to oppoſe her pleaſure. Then looking

looking towards the helpleſs object of her rage, bid her leave that room, and wait in her cloſet till ſhe ſhould think of a puniſhment adequate to her boldneſs.

Lord Berkley was ſtruck dumb, and, without attempting to exculpate himſelf from a charge which his indignant miſtreſs now thought proper to load him with, ſtood in reſpectful ſilence till ſhe had exhauſted the powers of altercation, and with no ſmall degree of ſatisfaction, himſelf, and the weeping Counteſs, ſaw her quit the room, and leave them at leiſure to lament for the gentle child of their affection, whoſe ſpirit, and even the dignity of her nature, which had often ſupported it, ſeemed now upon the point of being totally ſubdued.

Condemned through the whole of that evening to bear Iſabella's cruel taunts, who, diſappointed in her intention of receiving Mortimer alone, ſullenly avoided the ſociety of

of a ſon, whoſe excellencies would have been the pride and boaſt of any other mother. — Ella found her ſituation inſupportable. Not a moment was allowed even to melancholy retroſpection; nor was ſhe ſuffered to indulge a ſilent acquieſcence, for to every tormenting interrogation the Queen expected a reply, and when ſupper was announced, the poor girl abſolutely trembled, with the joyful hope of a tranſient reſpite; but as her Royal Miſtreſs declined taking any, this ray of comfort was ſoon extinguiſhed.

To a diſappointment ſo excruciating ſhe was forced to ſubmit, and began to imagine her preſence would not be diſpenſed with, even for the purpoſe of repoſe.

This farther mortification was certainly intended her, for Iſabella, about midnight, expreſſed her intention of going to reſt, ſignifying her command, that Ella ſhould wait in her anti-chamber; but a requeſt from Mortimer

Mortimer to ſee the Queen in her cloſet produced a welcome revolution, and ſhe permitted every attendant to retire, except a confidential ſervant, Lady Duval.

Ella, however, was ſtrictly enjoined to avoid Lady Lancaſter's apartment, which was in the oppoſite wing to that where ſhe ſlept: It was a moſt unwelcome order; but ſhe dared not infringe it, and ſhe aſcended the ſtairs with a heart as heavy as her ſtep was ſlow.

The lamps in the hall, and thoſe lights placed along the gallery, began now to give a weak and uncertain direction, as their expiring gleams ſcarcely ſerved to conduct her to the door of her chamber, to which Urſula, who continued to ſleep with her, had been ſome time retired: Ella had juſt reached the entrance, when ſhe was ſtartled by the ſound of a voice, which ſhe thought called her by her name. With a doubting heart

ſhe

ſhe liſtened, and heard it diſtinctly repeated, and as it appeared to come from below, ſhe ventured to go back to the head of the ſtairs, where, looking over, ſhe perceived the figure of a man, who, in a low and fearful tone, bid her deſcend.

With a trembling, though joyful, ſtep ſhe immediately obeyed; for the voice was Lord Berkley's, who, taking her hand, led her with the profoundeſt ſilence through a ſide door in the hall, by the means of which ſhe had formerly meditated an eſcape. This opened to a ſmall yard appropriated to the purpoſe of ſupplying the houſe with wood and other matters. Croſſing this yard Ella found an old portal, under the ruins of which they ſafely paſſed into the road, which ran along the back of the building, and, to her extreme ſurpriſe, ſhe beheld a ſervant of his Lordſhip's waiting with two horſes.

He now broke the ſolemn ſilence with aſking

aſking her, "If ſhe had courage to venture a few miles with his ſervant, who would conduct her to a village, where ſhe would be perfectly ſafe till Lady Lancaſter and himſelf could adopt ſome plan for her farther ſecurity?"

"And why not to Lambert's cottage," thought Ella; "there I could undoubtedly be hidden?" This ſhe ventured to ſuggeſt to him.

"It is too far, my dear. Be ſatisfied with the protection I am able to give; you have enemies under this roof, who will employ every art power can render effectual to find you. The Counteſs will not ceaſe to pray for you. This ſcheme is her's. — He then tenderly kiſſed her cheek, and placing her upon one of the horſes, bid her guide take the moſt unfrequented road to Wooler, and turned about to paſs the portal; but ſuddenly recollecting himſelf, while the weeping

weeping girl was charging him with the tendereſt remembrances to her beloved friends, he put a purſe into her hand, containing twenty marks, which her generous benefactreſs had ſent her, and immediately diſappeared."

This was a revolution ſo unexpected, that Ella, involved in a variety of ideas reſpecting it, gave little heed to the lovely ſcenes which the glowing dawn rapidly diſcloſed. Her conductor too, gave no other interruption than merely now and then to comfort her with an aſſurance that they ſhould ſoon reach Wooler, "And ſee, Lady (he cried) yonder old building is the church belonging to the place."

While he was ſpeaking, the chimnies and roofs of the houſes aroſe from behind a little hill which intervened between them and the village, and the man riding towards a cottage, which ſtood at a little diſtance, told her he was to leave her there.

Helping

Helping her, therefore, to alight, he gave a decent looking woman a meſſage from Lady Lancaſter, which procured Ella the moſt reſpectful conſideration; but ſhe pined for her ancient friends.—Lambert and Adela mixed their images with others, perhaps of a ſtill more tender complexion; yet the perfect obedience ſhe determined to accord to Lady Lancaſter's and Lord Berkley's wiſhes, grounded in her heart a reſolution to reſiſt the indulgence of her own inclinations, and while her eyes would fill with the remembrance of her paſt rural enjoyments, ſhe would fix them inſtinctively, as it were upon the eminences around her, fondly appropriating a ſimilarity of ſituation to thoſe ſhe ſo earneſtly deſired to reviſit.

One mild and beautiful evening, as Ella was remarking the ſoft and glowing tinges of a ſetting ſun, irradiating the edges of a gloomy cloud, on which he ſeemed for a moment to repoſe, till gradually ſinking his beams illu-

mined

mined and pierced, in various directions, its bulky maſs.

Her looks were called from the ſublime object by the ſhadow of a figure interpoſing between that and her weakened eye—at the firſt glance—her terrified imagination made it to be Mortimer; but a ſecond, though it relieved her from a ſhock ſo horrid, brought no aſſurance that ſhe ſhould be unmoleſted by him.

He would have ſpoken; but ſhe ſtaid not to hear what he ſaid, and fled into the houſe impreſſed by a firm belief, that ſome agent of her fearful enemy had diſcovered her; nor would ſhe for ſeveral ſucceſſive days quit the cottage, leaſt ſhe might again encounter the unknown ſtranger.

More agitated than before, Ella could not repreſs her increaſing deſire to go to Lambert's, where ſhe fancied ſhe ſhould be ſecure

from every danger, and even reſolved to venture the diſpleaſure of her noble friends, in ſo doing. Her hoſteſs obſerving her extreme uneaſineſs, and fancying ſomething amiſs in herſelf, redoubled her attention; but gathering from ſeveral obſcure hints her wiſhes to leave that place, frankly offered her own ſon, as a guide to any town ſhe ſhould name.

Ella's heart bounded at the propoſal; but what would Lord Berkley ſay, ſhould ſhe act counter to his orders? This difficulty was ſoon obviated by the good woman, whoſe elder ſon was ſteward at Berkley Caſtle, to whom ſhe promiſed to ſend any excuſe her gueſt choſe to make for her departure. — Lambert's reſidence was now deſcribed, as much at leaſt as ſhe knew of it, and when ſhe mentioned Stainmore, her landlady pointing to ſome vaſt hills ranging along the northern horizon, and named them as the objects of Ella's deſcription.

It

It was then ſettled that William ſhould take her on the following morning as far on the way as was open to a horſe, and with many expreſſions of gratitude, ſhe left her obliging friend, and taking the diſtant hills for a guide, they travelled till a burning ſun induced them to take a more ſhady path, which run along the edge of a wilderneſs.

William now ſeemed rather perplexed, as he found, if they meant to gain thoſe eminences, it was neceſſary to diſmount, and purſue the way which led thro' brambles and thick underwood of no very friendly deſcription; nor was it poſſible for a horſe to carry them ſafely along the inequalities of the ſurface, and what was worſe, they knew not if that was the right road.

Ella now expreſſed a fervent wiſh to meet ſome one who might be able to direct them, while ſhe trembled at the idea of being met by Mortimer, or his emiſſaries; when ſud-

denly the lad pointing to a ſeat under a tree, which overhung a ſmall ſtream that run by the ſide of the wood, ſhe ſaw a perſon upon it leaning in a contemplative poſture, and before ſhe had time to conſider of the propriety of applying to him for intelligence, he was riſing to inform William, who had already made the neceſſary inquiry, and found the neareſt way lay immediately through the thickets; but that which was ſafeſt wound round the extremity of them, keeping the rivulet to the right.

"Yes, and then you know (ſaid her guide eager to return) when you have paſſed here, you will ſoon be there, as you may ſee, my Lady, by them mountains."

Ella knew not how to truſt to *them* mountains for information, and ſtill leſs choſe to accept the ſtranger's offer to conduct her, and felt yet more vexed when William went on to ſay, "He thought the clerk-like Gentleman

tleman had made a fair propoſal, and he was ſure the Lord Berkley would be glad to hear ſhe had got ſafe to old Lambert's."

The ſtranger now lifted his eager eyes to the diſconcerted girl, and reſpectfully approaching, would have aſſiſted her to diſmount. — She had no choice. — The boy ſeemed impatient to take back her horſe, ſhe therefore modeſtly declining any help, jumped from the ſteed, and, after paying her ſimple conductor a liberal compliment from the purſe of her benefactreſs, took the path pointed out by the ſtranger, who obſerving her confuſion, would no longer diſtreſs her by his interference, but quitted her with evident reluctance.

CHAP. X.

Compaſſion is an emotion of which you ought never to be aſhamed,—Graceful in youth is the tear of ſympathy, and the heart that melts at the tale of woe.

BLAIR.

TOO much agitated (by an encounter which, in a ſituation ſo hazardous, ſhe conſidered as an addition to the many difficulties which had hitherto ſuppreſſed hope, even in the moment of exultation,) to attend either to the diſtance or ſite of the aſylum ſhe was ſeeking, Ella paſſed perplexedly on, and

and continued to indulge the moſt unpleaſant reflections without any other fear than the dread of a purſuit—when ſuddenly her haſty and incautious ſteps, were checked by the appearance of an approaching tempeſt.

The air was perfectly calm, but ſtrongly impregnated with ſulphur, a thick and livid gloom hung over the South, and at the moment Ella looked up, ſhe ſaw a faint gleam of lightning break through the lower part of a heavy cloud, which by that time had completely enveloped the face of the ſun.

Hopeleſs of ſhunning the approaching ſtorm, and equally ſo of finding the ſmalleſt ſhelter, as ſhe was now entered upon a dry and barren heath, all her recent vexations were deemed trifling, compared to the miſchief which probably awaited her; even a vaſt wild wood, which ſkirted the horizon to the North Weſt, offered no certain expectation of relief, for ſhe was philoſopher enough

to be aware of the danger reſulting from the approximating flaſhes to thoſe venerable trees which otherwiſe might have protected her. To add to her fears ſhe had now completely loſt the track ſhe meant to keep. All was uncertainty, to which was united the moſt cruel alarm.

The regular and awful approach of the cloud, on which ſhe caſt at intervals an apprehenſive eye, increaſed her terror. The lightning, gradually growing ſtronger, glanced diſmally around, while the thunder, at firſt low, ſhort, and intermitting, rolled heavily along. Bewildered with every horrid ſuggeſtion, ſhe ran unconſciouſly towards the wood; but at too great a diſtance to reach in time what, when arrived at, ſhe would ſcarcely have entered.

Totally overcome by the dread ſo natural to her ſex, Ella no longer ventured to gaze upon the burſting cloud; but haſtened forwards

wards in the utmoſt diſmay, liſtening to the riſing wind, which ſweeping over the waſte, ſnatched up the duſt in ſmall whirling eddies, and ſhuddering at every lengthening peal, poor Ella had been involved in midnight darkneſs.—She had experienced every horror, ſolitude, fatigue, and the dread of enemies, could induce; but this new and unexpected danger, though merely perſonal, ſeemed yet more powerfully to ſhake her fortitude than all the evils ſhe had combated before. It was peculiarly calculated to ſhock her feelings, ſince ſhe had been unable, from her earlieſt infancy, to defy the terrors of a thunder ſtorm.

So true it is, that in every human mind ſome lurking weakneſs mixes with more noble principles. Thus Ella, who had ſubdued, by proper conſiderations, the fears of travelling alone, ſhrunk timidly from the elemental conflict, nor dared to lift an eye to the ſurrounding and gloomy proſpect —

when a loud hallooing, ſeemingly at no great diſtance, gave a joyful interruption to her diſtreſsful cogitation, and turning about ſhe beheld a hovel on the waſte, apparently intended for the uſe of ſuch as might be unhappily benighted on that unfavourable ſpot.

With eager haſte ſhe flew towards it—condemning her own imbecility that had occaſioned her to paſs it without diſcovering the friendly ſhelter, and gratefully thanked the honeſt ruſtic, who ſeeing her expoſed to the beating hail, which already had began to drive along the Heath, called haſtily to her to ſtop till it was over.

He was accompanied by a woman ſeemingly his own age, whoſe countenance, when Ella had obtained tranquillity ſufficient to examine it, expreſſed the deepeſt dejection. Her brother, as ſhe called the man, appeared equally melancholy. The hut, for it was little

little better, ſhe diſcovered to be their only habitation.

Perceiving her ſurpriſe at the deſolation around her, the young woman burſting into tears, aſſured her viſitor, it was not more than equal to her deſerts, adding,

"" O, Lady, the curſe of diſobedience falls heavy on us! We neglected a wretched dying parent, ſuffered him to languiſh for the neceſſaries of life, and even expire among ſtrangers; but we are puniſhed—every thing has gone wrong with us ſince—our cattle, corn and flocks, have been deſtroyed by the enemies—and—here ſhe went into the particulars of a tale ſo affecting in its purport, that the commiſerating Ella could not refuſe the tribute of a tear to the ſufferings of a neglected father—wondering at the open confeſſion his daughter made of the crime which cauſed it, till ſhe frankly confeſſed it was in conſequence of a vow ſhe had made

to the holy Virgin, as a proper penance for her enormous wickedneſs—never to omit any opportunity of expoſing it in its moſt glaring colours.

Deeply impreſſed by the ſtrange incident the generous maid accorded, that pity her rigorous virtue would have denied, and, during the continuance of the ſtorm, which yet promiſed but little abatement, endeavoured to ſooth the unhappy woman with an expectation of pardon; but ſhe ſhook her head in hopeleſs ſilence, and Ella ceaſed to urge, though ſhe could not forget the ſad occurrence, and the more ſtrongly to fix it in her feeling heart, as ſoon as a tranquil period preſented, ſhe threw all ſhe could remember of it on paper in the following form:

Sinking

SINKING beneath an oak's luxurant ſhade,
A reverend ancient preſs'd the verdant ſoil:
One palſied hand with feeble power upſtaid,
His furrow'd cheeks embrown'd by ſummer's toil.

Bare were his temples, or but thinly hung
The ſcatter'd locks, now chang'd to ſnowy white!
Trembling he bent each with'ring nerve unſtrung,
And floating vapours cloud his aching ſight.

A fatal dew his deep-ſunk wrinkles fill'd,
While faintly flow'd thro' every languid vein,
The purple tide, which age and want had chill'd,
In ſpeech he falter'd, and reſpired with pain.

Neglected at his feet in ruins lay,
Th' untuned inſtrument that long had charm'd
The ſwain light-footed, and the damſel gay,
Whoſe untaught movements every boſom warm'd.

Now

Now anxious round the honeſt ruſtic crowd,
With awkward care they raiſe his drooping head;
One grateful tear his weaken'd eye beſtowed,
The laſt ſad tribute ſorrow's victim ſhed.

"Dear friends," he cried—"Ah! ſtrive not to detain
A wearied ſoul who ſeeks eternal peace;
Driven by baſe *children*, from my native plain
I go, where want and pining care ſhall ceaſe.

While from my harp diſcordant ſounds I drew,
To keep theſe white hairs from the dark cold grave:
As to my feet the ſcanty tribute flew,
Thoſe *children* ridiculed the wounds they gave."

He ſtopp'd, and from the arms of pitying friends
Fell on the earth deprived of ſpeech and ſenſe;
When from the hill a female form deſcends,
Whoſe features ſpoke deſpair, and grief intenſe.

Trembling

Trembling the ſelf-convicted ſinner ſtands,
Adown her cheeks the heart ſprung torrent flows;
"Father," ſhe cries—then raiſed thoſe impious hands
That clos'd the door upon that father's woes.

"Yes—'tis my father—'tis his grief-worn face—
"I ſee the furrows wrought by age and tears;
"By children baniſh'd—left to ſad diſgrace,
"Harraſs'd with want in his declining years.

"Ah! poor old man—whoſe feeble feet have trod
"The thorny woods, and wide-extended plain;
"I feel thy ſuff'rings arm th'avenging rod,
"That ſtrikes ſuch tortures thro' this burning brain.

"Bear him, ye ſwains, to that deſerted home,
"Where once he govern'd with a gentle ſway,
"Till forced—O ſhame by ſavage hearts to roam,
"Till forced—to weep the mournful hours away."

Revived

Revived—while bleſſings trembled on his tongue,
Feebly he graſp'd her hand, and ſoftly ſigh'd;
Around her neck one arm he faintly flung,
Kiſs'd her pale cheek—then ſunk to earth he—died!

Rouſed from the melancholy ſtupor, induced by this mournful tale, Ella beheld, with indeſcribable pleaſure, the ſun breaking through the ſtormy clouds, which, gilt by his ſtrong and glowing beams, deſcribed a magnificent ſcene! She looked with an awful pleaſure upon the retiring blackneſs, which lowered ſtill more tremendouſly in its departure than approach, and taking the beſt directions her unhappy entertainers could give, ſhe once more ſet out with the full hope of reaching the cottage before ſunſet.

The face of the country, as ſhe advanced, became inſenſibly familiar, and turning the angle

angle of a wall ſhe lifted up her heart in thankfulneſs, when ſhe beheld the uncultivated waſte, which ſpread to the right and front of Lambert's cottage. This ſhe could not yet diſcern; but the hills beyond, with the well-remembered woods to the left of it, were objects on which ſhe dwelt with the pureſt delight.

Engaged in the ſweet contemplation, Ella thought not of the diſtance.—She ſtepped lightly on, and in leſs than half an hour, the dear cottage was once more viſible.—She ran—ſhe almoſt flew—exclaiming,

"I ſee him—it is Lambert—my friend—my preſerver—and the next moment ſunk nearly ſenſeleſs into that good man's arms, who ſpringing forward, received her with all the rapture his weak frame could ſupport. Feeble from extreme age, he could ſcarcely aſſiſt her to enter the houſe, and for ſome minutes the joy of both was incoherent and extravagant,

extravagant, when Ella perceiving the altered and improved appearance of his little dwelling:

"O my father!" ſhe exclaimed, "you are no longer poor—who has done ſuch an act of juſtice to friendleſs merit."

"One, my deareſt child, who is waſting for ſome concealed error, the remnant of an unhappy life."—Ella looked ſurpriſed.

"All I know," continued Lambert, "is, that—but Adela—poor Adela—I would tell you, Ella, that, after her death, I uſed to paſs much of my time abroad."

"*Dead!*—O my father, how much muſt you have endured!—Had I been preſent ——." She then burſt into a violent flood of tears.

"Don't

" Don't weep, Ella, ſhe is a bleſſed angel. Well, many a day have I loitered in the woods, becauſe I had no companion to ——."

Ella wiped his reverend cheek with her own handkerchief. He kiſſed her beautiful hand, as ſhe ſoftly preſſed his withered one.

" Let me juſt ſay," reſumed Lambert, " that one of my rambles extended to the gate in the wall which I told you of.

I was very melancholy, and ſat down on the ſtump of the oak, when I heard the gate open, and a Lady after carefully cloſing it, took the path which winds among the trees—the ſame indeed that I had paſſed. I followed her unſeen till ſhe came hither, and turning back ſhe beheld me;——but ſhe is coming down.

Ella's heart vibrated to the ſlow and feeble ſteps as they advanced. The queſtion of " who ſhe *could* be? was on her lips to Lambert, who roſe with humble reſpect as ſhe

ſhe entered the room, while Ella paid an equal tribute to the elegance which met her aſtoniſhed eyes, and ſilently wiſhed to ſee if her features, which were concealed by a large black veil, correſponded with the beauty of her fragile form.

CHAP.

CHAP. XI.

Guilt is the ſource of ſorrow—'tis the fiend,
The avenging fiend, that follows us behind.

ROWE.

THE ſingular appearance of this myſterious female caſt a gloom upon Ella's ideas, and a ſolemnity of the moſt chilling nature ſeemed to involve every viſible object.

She looked at Lambert: It had even ſtole over *his* venerable features, and ſhe felt an indeſcribable awe, when, to accelerate the poor invalid's freer reſpiration, the timid girl

girl ventured to remove the veil which evidently incommoded her; but it was haſtily, and ſomewhat angrily, replaced; abaſhed and mortified to ſee her little ſervices ſo unacceptable, ſhe ſoftly withdrew to the back of the Lady's chair, who had ſeated herſelf near the door.

A deep and melancholy ſilence followed, and every party appeared willing to encourage it.—It was a ſtrange reception for poor Ella; but Lambert knew not how juſt then, to make it more agreeable: However, the ſtranger riſing with difficulty, was another claim upon Ella's humanity, and ſhe reſpectfully offered her arm to ſupport her into the air.

This action naturally drew the Lady's eye upon one, whoſe tenderneſs demanded a *civil* return at leaſt.

" Holy

" Holy virgin," ſhe exclaimed, as one trembling hand threw up her veil, while the other held back the arm ſhe was about to accept—and ſinking again into the chair, exhibited the emaciated form, and ſtill lovely features of—Lady Fitzroy——."

Ella tearing off the veil, claſped it with a frantic air between her hands—and fixing a look of horror upon the object before her—ſaw the affecting original of the portrait at Mortimer-Houſe.

She was unable to ſpeak—ſhe was unable to ſit—but knelt, the pale, cold image of deſpair.

In vain did Lydia, an old and confidential ſervant, apply every reſtorative to her apparently dying miſtreſs.

In vain did the weeping Lambert endeavour to rouſe his darling child, from the

the alarming ſtupor which ſeemed rather to increaſe.

No hopeful conſequences followed, for a conſiderable time their united attempts, *till* they began in honeſt anguiſh to bewail their ſucceſsleſs efforts, and while the poor old man was lamenting his Ella's inſenſibility, he perceived her mother's pulſe to beat, though feebly, and life once more viſited, with apparent reluctance, the helpleſs frame.

They had now placed her ſenſeleſs daughter in an oppoſite ſeat, and when Lady Fitzroy raiſed her heavy eye to Heaven, it fell upon the ſweet, though inanimate, features of her neglected child.

" O tremendous Lord!" ſhe cried, " was this—this ſad memento wanting to ſharpen the pangs of guilt?

" Look there, Lydia—ſee——Lambert, the child you have ſo long deplored—ſhe is

is returned to complete the meaſure of my woes.

" *I* have *killed* her.

" Ah! thou deſerted bloſſom," kiſſing her pale lips, " how could I neglect thy infant ſweetneſs?

" O, Mortimer! how many more ſacrifices doſt thou require?"

Lydia would have checked theſe wild effuſions, for Lydia was deep in the guilty ſecret though her honeſt ſoul diſdained the crime her Lady ſo incautiouſly hinted at, and had followed this miſerable woman to a retirement, which ſhe left in preference to Lambert's cottage.

It may here be neceſſary juſt to remark, that Lady Fitzroy, deteſting Mortimer's violence the evening of Ella's eſcape from her

father's, cloſed from that moment her long and infamous correſpondence with the monſter, and notwithſtanding every endeavour to regain her, he could obtain no other conſideration than her picture, which ſhe had drawn in a dreſs and attitude the moſt expreſſive of her feelings, and which ſhe thought beſt calculated to rouſe his:—But of this he made no other uſe than to prove to the Queen, who had ſuſpected his attachment, that it was totally done away.

Lydia was ſucceſsful in her attempt to calm her wretched miſtreſs, by aſſuring her, that her daughter's recovery depended upon the moſt abſolute ſtillneſs.

It was enough—ſhe checked her ſobs—ſhe ſtifled her groans, and remained ſilently weeping over the intereſting object—daſhing away her tears as they impeded her ardent gaze—when a ſudden hallooing without aſtoniſhed Lambert, who ſtepping to the door

door ſaw a perſon haſtily diſmount, while another juſt then appeared from the woods, and it was a low voice that they had juſt heard.—Lambert followed the Gentleman, who had ſo rapidly diſengaged himſelf from his horſe at the very moment that Ella had ſlowly opened her eyes upon Raymond De Vallenciennes — his tranſport— ſorrow—affection—and impetuous exclamations—nearly reduced the ſlowly reviving Ella to her former ſtate.— The reflections upon ſuch oppoſite and unaccountable events crowded ſo forcibly to her diſturbed imagination, that reaſon itſelf could ſcarcely ſupport the various ſhocks.

So lately a priſoner to the vile Mortimer, ſo happily liberated by her noble and generous friends.

The mother, whoſe want of tenderneſs, and ſuppoſed loſs ſhe had ſo often lamented, now receding as it were from that happineſs

an union ſo long deſpaired of would produce, for it was too viſible her life was near its termination, and, if poſſible, the yet more wonderful appearance of Raymond, whoſe intereſt had been ſo warmly eſtabliſhed in her gentle boſom, even by the cautious Lady Lancaſter; all this was the work of a few weeks, and the major part, of a few hours only.

She ſat therefore in a ſtupid reverie; nor was the Lady Fitzroy's mind in a much more recollected ſituation, while her declining health rendered it ſtill more dangerous. — In De Vallenciennes ſhe beheld the ſtranger, who had accoſted her in the woods, and whoſe unguarded behaviour announced him as Ella's fervent admirer.

In his companion ſhe ſaw the amiable Sir Joſelin Tracy, to whoſe obliging attention ſhe had (though her perſon was unknown to him) been indebted for her ſafe conduct to the

the Caſtle, which, as we have before obſerved, a few Nuns had made their reſidence, and had alſo proved a ſanctuary to her when ſhe quitted her huſband's Caſtle to ſeek ſhelter, where the poor King had been for a ſhort time confined previous to his murder in Berkley Caſtle; her heart melted over this dear child, and longed to fold her to its quick tho' feeble beatings, but was reſtrained from the ſweet gratification by the preſence of theſe ſtrangers.

It was then that Lambert's uſual caution became of infinite uſe, and addreſſing the ardent De Vallenciennes, whom he immediately recognized, he entreated him to reſpect the viſible diſtreſs which ſeveral concurring incidents had produced.

"If my honoured Lord," added he, "will truſt his faithful ſervant as he has formerly done, every ſeeming myſtery ſhall, with permiſſion,

miſſion, be properly explained; but theſe are ſcenes ——.

" I ſtand corrected, Lambert;—but to ſee—to know—that this dear invaluable creature is once more within reach of my honourable purſuit, may at leaſt excuſe my impetuoſity;"—and heſitating, and looking round:

" May I not alſo congratulate her upon her releaſe from that pernicious enemy to every virtue."

"O, I have much to aſk—much to tell;—but for the preſent we will retire.—Lambert, I depend upon your promiſe—do not deceive me."

Ella, too faint to ſpeak, could only bow to the departing Raymond, who taking Sir Joſelin's arm, reluctantly quitted the cottage, and left Lady Fitzroy at liberty to expreſs the fond emotions of her ſoul, though not till

till ſhe had tremblingly demanded from *what* enemy of virtue her daughter had eſcaped?

Her anſwer almoſt deprived the unhappy woman of her reaſon. — She caught her daughter's trembling hand—her face almoſt in contact with the pale cold cheek over which ſhe leant—her own ſuffuſed with a hectic tint, heightened by ſtrong and painful ſenſations, evidently ariſing from the mention of Mortimer's name, while her eye gleamed with wild indignation.

"I think," ſhe cried, "you ſpoke of Mortimer?"

"Who ſpeaks of Mortimer, but to execrate his name?"

Then changing her quick deſultory tones to the ſolemn notes of piercing ſorrow, while ſhe raiſed her feeble form, as if to invite the ſad intention of her pitying child,

" Behold," ſaid the poor creature—" Behold the dreadful effects of miſplaced confidence!—View this grief-worn countenance—obſerve the obſcurity which envelopes the deſtiny of Fitzroy's relict.

" Once—O degrading remembrance—Once the fair and happy partner of a noble Earl—diſtinguiſhed more by my alliance to that beſt of men, than even for beauty, wealth and birth.

" Yet was ſomething wanting—all I enjoyed was not ſufficient.

" Honour—virtue—fled before my deluded eyes—infamy—guilt and anguiſh—ſucceeded—*for Mortimer introduced them.*

" To him I owe the refinement of miſery. He. ——

" No

" No more, my deareſt mother.—Think not of an objeƈt ſo deteſtable."

Ella ſtopped.

Bewildered and diſtreſſed, ſhe only ſought to prevent what appeared to be little more than the ramblings of an unſettled mind, and yet the idea that Mortimer ſhould be fixed upon as the oſtenſible cauſe of this extreme agitation diſturbed her gentle boſom; but endeavouring to ſuppreſs every diſgraceful ſuſpicion, ſhe ſtruggled to obtain a degree of compoſure equal to the taſk of relating her various ſufferings to Lady Fitzroy, who, upon Ella's abrupt ſilence, was again attempting to expreſs, in unequal terms, the perturbation of her ſoul; but once more interrupted, and by her faithful ſervant, who had many motives for wiſhing to check her unreſerved communications, ſhe immediately ſubmitted, and as ſhe attended to Ella's full communication of the events which followed her un-

cle's preſervation of her on that terrible night, her ſighs and tears increaſed almoſt to ſuffocation, and during the pauſes weakneſs obliged the gentle girl to make, ſhe would preſs her to her boſom, exclaim againſt the wretch who could take advantage of ſuch imminent danger.

" But," ſaid ſhe once, in a low and indignant tone—" It was Mortimer," and then looking with a diſturbed aſpect upon her ſympathizing child:

" But was it, *indeed*, Mortimer? And did he dare to think of Ella Fitzroy?"

" O madneſs!—The daughter of whom? No—no—I only dream—Nature's pure and ſacred claims are inviolate.—Go on, my love—tell me all your ſorrows—but ſay not they were cauſed by Edmund Mortimer."

" You

" You are faint, my dear Lady, and your daughter too, requires repoſe. Think no more of paſt afflictions."

" You are very good, Lydia; but nobody ſhall part us, remember that."

Poor Ella, exceſſively ſhocked by theſe evident wanderings, joined with the faithful ſervant in perſuading her mother to retire, and then deplored with Lambert the unſettled ſtate of her mind, while the ſtrange hints, reſpecting Mortimer, ſeemed to point at tranſactions that ſhook her ſoul."

CHAP. XII.

And when I am cold in my tomb,
Some hearts ſtill will ſorrow for me.

Queen of Scot's Lamentations.

AFTER ſeveral days of painful uncertainty her gloomy doubts were confirmed, and ſhe had the additional unhappineſs to witneſs the moſt violent ſhocks of inſanity, which tearing a frame already exhauſted by illneſs, and the inceſſant reproaches of an accuſing conſcience, promiſed a ſpeedy termination of her torments.

Ella

Ella, happy in idea by thoſe ſweet maternal endearments her firſt interview had called forth, could ſcarcely bear this horrid interruption, nor the extravagant miſtakes which Lady Fitzroy's frenzy led her to commit; ſometimes charging her with her father's murder, ſometimes calling upon her as the angel who muſt interfere between a parent and eternal deſtruction — now accuſing herſelf as the wicked promoter of their houſe's ruin—then execrating the exiſtence of a wretch for whom ſhe had forfeited every bleſſing innocence could endear.

To theſe awful vagaries of an unſettled brain, Ella could only oppoſe a deep and ſilent grief, fixing upon the wild, tho' ſunken eyes of her loſt mother looks of pity and tenderneſs:

But this ſcene of horror could not be long ſupported, and when, after three days of continual watching, ſhe conſented to give up

to Lydia for a few hours her heavy taſk, as if in compaſſion to her agonizing ſoul, the ſhock of witneſſing a mother's dying moments was ſpared, and before ſhe could again commence her mournful office, it was for ever concluded, and the melancholy conſolation of cloſing a parent's eyes denied!

The communication of this ſad intelligence, though hinted in the gentleſt manner by her revered Lambert, produced a return of that alarming ſtupor, which had overpowered her ſpirits when ſhe firſt diſcovered her unhappy parent, and when it ſubſided a little, ſhe inſiſted upon attending the ſacred remains to the Abbey, which the caprice of a diſturbed mind had of late rendered diſguſtful; but weakneſs and grief prevented the completion of her wiſh, and Lambert, with Lydia, were deputed to the ſolemn charge.

During

During the tedious period of Ella's confinement, Raymond had made ſeveral efforts to be admitted.—Doubts—fears and hopes, alternately contributed to harraſs his ſoul. The myſtery connected with the ſtrange Lady's reſidence, and Ella's apparent ſurpriſe reſpecting her, demanded explanation; but who was to give it? From Lambert he expected nothing that could violate his integrity; as to his frequent queſtions the honeſt creature either gave no reſolution, or only ſuch as heightened anxiety.

He entreated his patience—he had promiſed not to deceive him—he would be accountable for Ella's ſtay at his cottage—and engaged, ſhould any incident occaſion her removal, to give him the earlieſt notice—when interrogated as to his lodger, he confeſſed her relationſhip to his dear child, but choſe not to own in what degree.

With

With this De Vallenciennes was obliged to appear ſatisfied for the preſent, and in return informed Lambert that he owed his diſcovery of Ella to Sir Joſelin, who proved not only to be the ſtranger before whom William had addreſſed her as the acquaintance of Lord Berkley, and recommended him as a proper guard to Lambert's; but the ſame, whoſe ſudden appearance had driven her from the aſylum choſen for her by Lord Berkley.

"Of courſe," he added, "Sir Joſelin flew to him with his ſuſpicions, which were immediately ſeconded by Raymond, who waited only till his horſe was prepared to convey him to the cottage."

He then, in the fullneſs of his heart, informed this good old man of his intentions reſpecting this lovely girl, and every occurrence that had befallen him, concluding with aſking Lambert's friendſhip upon this intereſting occaſion, who pitying and feeling for that

that youthful impetuoſity which overlooks the ſuggeſtions of prudence, liſtened with a ſerene aſpect to the effuſions of his love, and contrived to ſtrengthen his patience without increaſing his hope. . . .

For ſeveral weeks the alarming dejection of his drooping charge gave her aged guardian extreme uneaſineſs. Every ſcene that uſed to fill her innocent heart with pleaſure now became diſtaſteful.

A mother deſcended to her grave with ſuch a ſenſe of guilt, as almoſt to preclude an expectation of forgiveneſs.—A father, murdered, perhaps, by the monſter which had ſullied the purity of his name.—Her own it might be involved in equal diſgrace.—What in the world could poſſeſs power ſufficient to charm away ſuch ſad reflections?

Not even the affections of De Vallenciennes.—No—whiſpered her loaded heart—fate

fate has now given a dreadful negative to every half-formed expectation of paſſing my life with him.—I am actually polluted—my birth more doubtful than before — for who knows but even *I* may owe my exiſtence to. ——

This recalled her wandering and terrible thoughts. — Her fears had added the name of Mortimer to the arguments of a delicate mind, and a mother's crime imprinted upon it the ſhadow of contempt—contempt, where duty alone ſhould be legibly written.

" O," ſaid ſhe to Lydia, who liſtened with pain to her ſad ſuggeſtions, " that the bittereſt tears could eraſe a word ſo opprobrious.—Tell me, if poſſible, ſomething that may mitigate my terrible ſuſpicions—but be careful to tell me *truth.*"

" *Truth!*" thought Lydia, " O how unwelcome a taſk!"

" Indeed,

"Indeed, Lady," ſaid the honeſt creature, "I could wiſh to be excuſed; it will only make my gentle miſtreſs melancholy."

"Melancholy! Lydia: Ah! if that be the only effect you dread, proceed;—that is a feeling I can well indulge."

Lydia ſaw no difference between that and the moſt piercing grief—a want of cheerfulneſs was to her—ſorrow, anguiſh, and every evil the mind could endure; ſhe contrived, however, in her narrative to ſoften what ſhe could not hide, nor owned to the early commencement that guilty attachment which took place in the ſecond year of Lady Fitzroy's marriage—diſguiſing alſo the real circumſtances of that horrid night—which Ella, young and uninformed, could ſcarcely gueſs; for well Lydia knew that on the foregoing day Lord Henry, in his journey to his brother's Caſtle, had ſtopped for refreſhment at a ſeat belonging to one of Mortimer's friends,

friends, where he had heard his ſiſter's character ſo unequivocally treated, as to oblige him to the neceſſity of offering a challenge to the traducer.—This was readily accepted; but before the combat could be properly arranged, his Lordſhip received ſuch proofs from a Nobleman of the higheſt integrity, of her incontinence, that they amounted to the moſt ſtinging conviction, and his gage being recovered, he quitted the houſe with a heart loaded with ſhame and grief, and this accounted for the unhappy Earl's behaviour to his Counteſs, as well as Lord Henry's indignant hints.

The ſudden and baſe attack upon theſe brave Noblemen doubtleſs prevented the execution of a proper revenge, and Mortimer, whoſe motives for ſuch infernal cruelty will be hereafter explained—failing of his intent of carrying off the innocent Ella and her culpable mother, both which he aimed at, gratified as much as he could of his revenge upon

upon the injured Earl William, whoſe body, with his brother's, was conjectured to be carried away by the aſſailants.

Of Lady Fitzroy's grief and indignation Lydia ſpoke more freely, and painted in ſimple, though expreſſive, terms, her behaviour at quitting that ſcene of ſuſpected murder, fully inſiſting upon her reſolute refuſal to continue ſecluded from the knowledge of her undoer.

"All that and the following day," ſaid the honeſt creature, "my poor Lady faſted, and when we left the Caſtle I thought ſhe would have died—ſo weak, and ſo unhappy, I thought ſhe would not be able to ſit her horſe."

Indeed, had it not been for a kind ſtranger, whom we paſſed on the road, we ſhould never have reached the Abbey; but he went with us quite to the great gates, and when my

my Lady offered him a purſe of marks, he refuſed them with ſuch reſpect." ——

"Well, Madam, the Abbeſs received us without aſking any queſtions. Our board was paid before hand, for I was ordered to carry all the Counteſs's jewels with me, as well as a conſiderable ſum of money. The jewels are not all gone yet: I ſhall give them up to you, Lady, whenever you pleaſe to demand them."

"Go on, Lydia," ſaid Ella, ſighing deeply.

"O, Madam! I can only ſay that your poor mother was diſmally altered—always crying—ſometimes in the garden—but more commonly in the burying ground."

"Often the Lady Abbeſs wanted her to take the veil; but though ſhe would not be profeſſed, ſhe never appeared without one.

"At

" At laſt they teazed her ſo, that ſhe was reſolved to leave them, and one day, after a long walk, ſhe told me ſhe had found a ſweet place, where ſhe hoped to die in peace. I was glad to hear it, and we ſoon came here to ſettle."

Lydia ceaſed—but Ella could derive no conſolation from her tale.

It diſpelled not the dark cloud of infamy from her mother's fame.—It cleared not away the doubts which tormented her.

Lambert's arguments, though derived from the higheſt and only ſure ſource of comfort, failed in their effect. One, indeed, materially affected her ſuſceptible ſoul.

" Do not, my child," ſaid he, " Do not, by this deep ſorrow, make me ſelfiſh enough to claim an angel from the ſkies. Bleſſed in *your* ſociety, I had reſigned my Adela without

out a pang, and moſt ſure your return not only leſſened, but obliterated them: Do not, then, induce me to wiſh her back again, or rather do not ſtrengthen my wiſhes to reſign her."

"Ah! the poor Adela," ſaid Ella, mixing her tears with his as they rolled over his venerable cheeks.

"Pardon my ſelfiſhneſs, Lambert.—How could I forget that patient goodneſs?

"O that my mother—my poor unhappy mother's laſt hours had been bleſſed with ſuch conſolations, as I am *ſure* hers were; but you know, my dear friend ——."

"Fie, Ella," ſaid the old man, "I did not expect reflections of this nature from *you*."

The

The reproof was effectual; ſhe lifted up her hands:

"Pardon—O pardon this wickedneſs:—I will not diſtruſt Almighty Goodneſs—nor from this hour wound your pious ear with one reproachful murmur."

He then tenderly kiſſing her offered cheek, called her his ſweet and only earthly comfort, and immediately changed the ſubject to one quite as perplexing as that had been grievous:

But perceiving in her changing countenance the delicate apprehenſions which the mention of Raymond's name occaſioned, he prudently dropped his intention, and, aſſiſted by Lydia, attempted to ſoften the poignancy of her ſorrow, by ſubſtituting with an ingenuous tenderneſs, ſubjects of a contrary tendency to thoſe which had ſo violently overthrown her tranquillity.

Ella was grateful for the attempt, and acknowledged their kindneſs in terms forcibly calculated to expreſs the feelings of a gentle as well as generous heart.

END OF THE SECOND VOLUME.